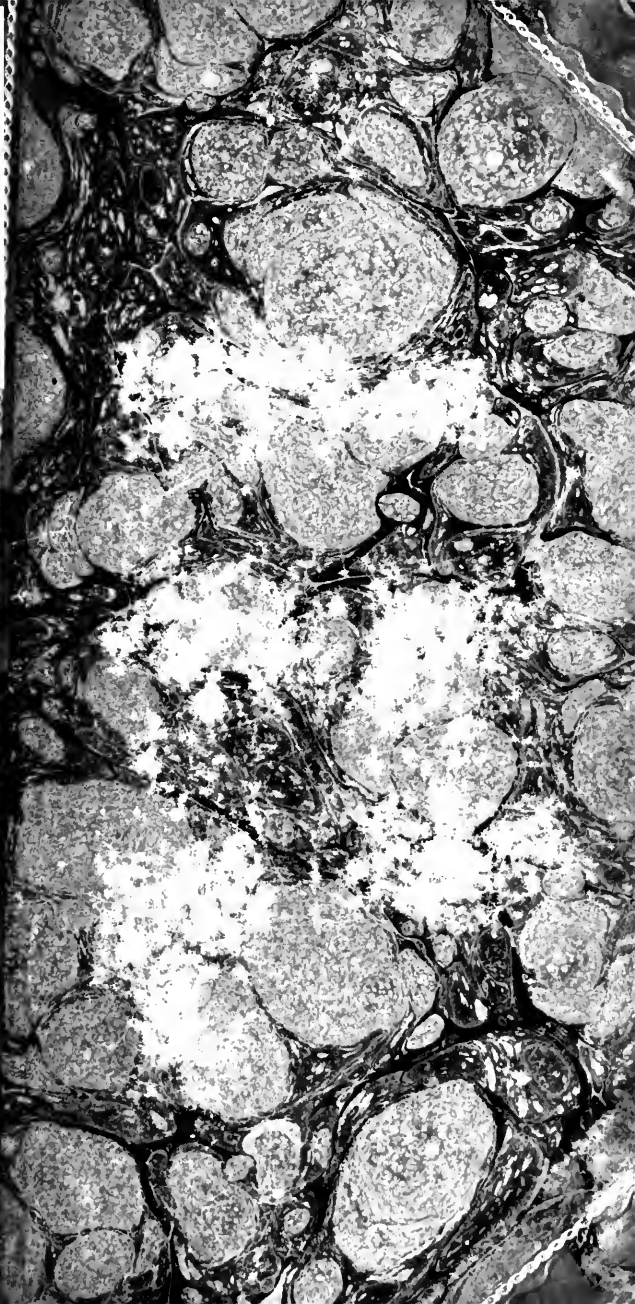


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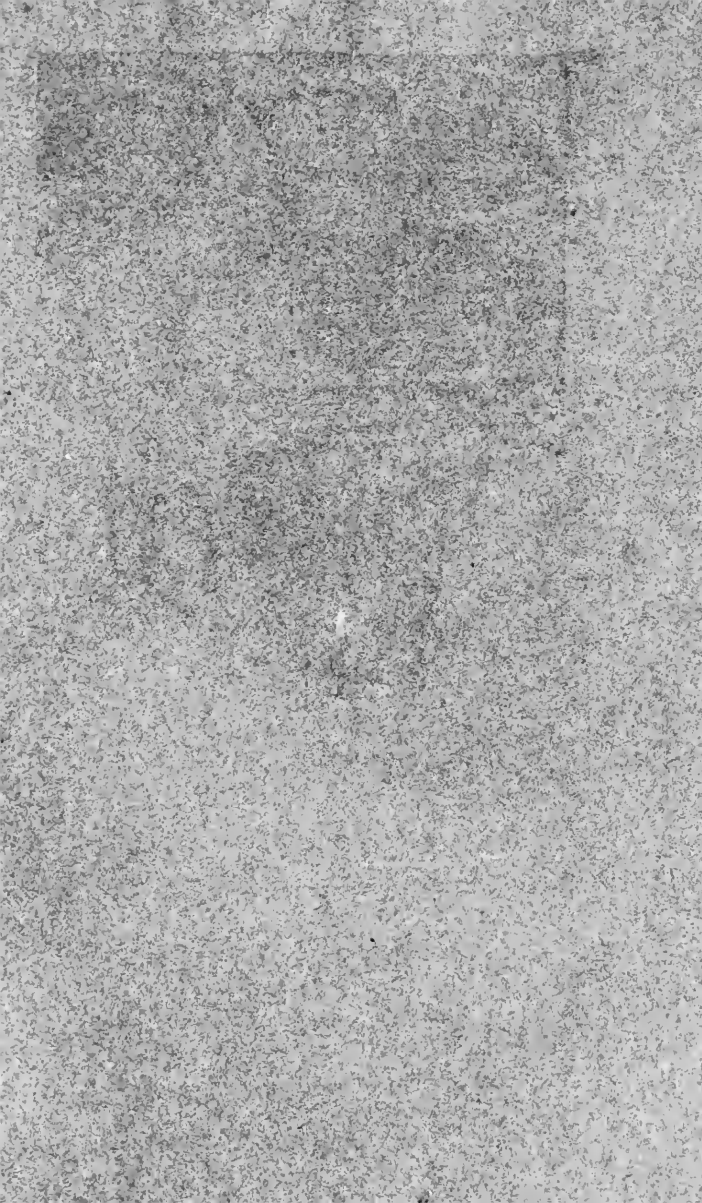


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THE
PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE,

VOL. II.

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THE
PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE,

A
NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY
MISS JANE PORTER,

AUTHOR OF THADDEUS OF WARSAW, SIDNEY'S APHORISMS,
AND THE SCOTTISH CHIEFS.

I will confess the ambitious projects which I once had, are dead within me. After having seen the parts which fools play upon the great stage; a few books, and a few friends, are what I shall seek to finish my days with. TWEDDELL.

VOL. II.

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THE
PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE.

CHAP. I.

NEXT morning's rayless sun found Louis passing from his hardly pressed pillow, to the prosecution of his appointed task for the day. Ignatius had laid before him new papers, of a totally different character from the former, and much more difficult to transcribe.

As he continued to write, he heard the furious beating of a snow-storm against the windows, which, in this apartment, were not only grated but too high in the wall to allow of outward view. The heat of a well-filled stove excluded the encreased cold of the season; and the fierce-

ness of the elements made him the less regret the exercise he must relinquish, or lose all hope of reducing the immense piles before him.

The Sieur appeared at his former nocturnal hour, to receive what had been finished, and to leave other manuscripts to which he desired duplicates. Day after day Louis was kept close to his desk, and every night delivered to his unrelenting task-master the labour of the day.

At the expiration of a week, the Sieur told him he should not see him again till the first of the ensuing month; but that he had a correspondence to leave with him, which he must completely transcribe into a regular series, by the time of his return. Louis received his orders in respectful silence, and when he was again left to his solitary toil, he found that his voluminous task was in the Slavonian and Turkish characters. Neither of these languages had been parts of his studies; so he pursued his monotonous employment

each succeeding day, from morning until midnight, without the accession of one new idea, or a moment's leisure for retrospection on former acquirements.

The sun rose, and the sun set; the weather, foul or fair; gloomy in storm, or gay with the scintillation of exhilarating frost, all found Louis de Montemar close at his desk. The iron-bound windows had never opened to the air; and the charcoal fumes which warmed the apartment, having no egress, hung in narcotic vapours on the vaulted roof. A heavy languor fell on its lonely inhabitant, and grew on him from day to day, till it left him hardly any other consciousness of being, than the faculty of moving, his now habituated hand, perpetually over the infinite reams of paper which lay before him.

On the night of the 1st of February, according to his promise, Ignatius entered the prison-room of his unrelaxing secretary. The piles which were com-

pleted, at last extorted from his unbending loftiness, an exclamation of admiration at such faultless execution and indefatigable perseverance. Louis's face no longer lighted up, as it was wont, at the voice of praise; but he bowed, though in silence. Had Ignatius spared a glance from the laborious heap to its unrepining artificer, that face would have told the tale his tongue had not uttered. The bloomy crimson of his cheek had perished under the withering breath of stoved confinement; and his eyes, before so luminous in health, so bright in youthful enjoyment, were sunk in languor under his darkening brows. So thoroughly was the *Sieur* absorbed in the business of his visit, he might not have observed these changes, had he not accidentally come in contact with the hand of his pupil in taking one of the packets. He started, as the touch seemed to scorch him.

“How is this?” cried he, eyeing Louis from head to foot, “you are ill.”

“Perhaps the confinement, Sir,” re-

turned he, " may discompose me a little. But custom will enure me to it, and meanwhile it is of no consequence."

" No," said Ignatius, " your diligence has been too severe ; you must have air and exercise. To-morrow you shall try their efficacy. I will send a respectable servant of my own, to attend you over the city."

Louis thankfully embraced the proposal.

The morrow's sun rose brilliant, as on the first morning he had hailed its beams from his chamber at Vienna. Louis dismissed a breakfast, for which he had no appetite ; and with a spring of joy, he could not have conceived it possible to have experienced by merely stepping forth into the open air, he followed Martini, (the promised attendant from the Sieur,) out of the great gates of the Chateau.

The man was an Italian, and possessed none of the taciturnity of his mysterious master. With the respect due to a

superior, but the garrulous gaiety of his country, he freely remarked to his companion on every object of sight, as he conducted him along the hoar-frosted avenue to the extensive glacis before the fortified walls of Vienna. Martini led the way through the Leopoldstadt-gate. Louis followed, but paid no attention to street nor square, palace nor cathedral; he was all occupied by the reviving aspirations he drew at every breath from an atmosphere whose ethereal quality seemed to penetrate every pore, and by an enchanting inebriation to restore him at once to his wonted elasticity of spirits.

Martini conducted him through the finest squares of the city, and along the most magnificent part of the suburbs towards the frozen Danube. It was now the hour of high gala. The noise and bustle of a countless multitude, passing and re-passing in a thousand different directions, soon summoned the concentrated senses of Louis to regard outward objects. The

beams of the sun played over the landscape; hues of light blue, intermingled with bloomy purple deepening into shade, checquered the hills on the horizon. A waving line of shining snow marked the heights of Calemberg, and a sky of the purest azure canopied the scene. At the distance of his windows from the river, he could only view a various and interminable mass of human beings moving on its surface; but now he could distinguish the peculiar dress and aspect of each individual of all the nations assembled on that universal theatre. Turks, Tartars, Greeks, Muscovites, Swedes, and Italians, English and French, all appeared as if travelling to some vast senate of mankind; or rather, so gay were their habits, so gorgeous their equipages, it might be taken for a pageantry in fairy-land.

Delighted to see the attention of his charge at last aroused, Martini allowed him, for some time, to gaze around in pleased amazement; then, resuming his

office of *Cicerone* with augmented eloquence, he particularized the objects most worthy observation, and explained them with the accuracy of an itinerary. The Asiatic structure, raising its gilded domes over the cedars of the island, and which Louis had noticed from his window, Martini informed him was the *Favorita*; the favorite palace of the imperial family. It was now their temporary residence; and in that direction he saw numerous carriages, of strange shapes and capricious magnificence, shoot along the ice. Fancy seemed to have exhausted all her varieties of form in the construction of these whimsical vehicles. Some were fashioned like triumphal cars, others like the fabled shells of marine deities, and many of shapes so fantastical and grotesque, that the incumbent seemed lying in the grasp of some sea or land monster. All were garnished with gilding, emblazoned arms, or gallant devices; while the master, wrapped in ermines, guided with silken

reins the flying horses, who, caparisoned in glittering housings, flashed by the spectator like the steeds of the sun. In some of the gayest *traineaux*, formed like scallop-shells and bedded with fur, beautiful women were seen reclining, while gentlemen sat on the sledge behind, managing the horses, and conversing with the ladies.

Louis was particularly struck with the singular beauty of the animals which drew these carriages. They were evidently of the Arabian breed, slight of limb, and carrying their branching necks with the grace of an antelope. The peculiar airiness and freedom of their pace, suited well with the Eastern magnificence of their trappings. An equipage with four of these fine creatures had just engaged his attention, when he found himself hurried forward by a crowd of foot-passengers, rushing to meet a cavalcade which preceded the Empress. At the moment of general clamour, he thought

he heard his own name suddenly ejaculated. He listened, — it was repeated, and in the voice of Duke Wharton. Louis's heart leaped to the sound. He turned towards it, and saw the Duke standing behind the car of one of the Arch-duchesses. Another gentleman shared his post of honour, and guided the reins, while the Duke's eyes met the eager recognition and out-stretched arms of his friend. The carriage shot swiftly onward, but Wharton also extended his arms to Louis, and, as he was snatched from his sight, pointed to the *Favorita*. Louis understood that it was there he must seek him; and thither he determined to go, when he should walk out the following day.

The sight of the Duke, not merely recalled the enthusiastic feeling with which he originally regarded him, but presented to Louis the image of England, and all that it contained dear to his habits and to his heart! Tears rushed

into his eyes: they seemed to overflow his soul, as he clasped his hands and inwardly exclaimed, "England! beloved land of liberty and tenderness! renown may be sought in other countries, but happiness is to be found in thee!"

For the first time since his arrival at Vienna, did he allow his heart to speak even to himself, to acknowledge that he was unhappy! That he had exchanged the generous freedom of the home of his youth, for harsh imprisonment in a foreign land. That he had parted with relations, who loved and honoured him, to become dependent on a stranger, and bound to the toil of a slave!

"Is such to be the purpose of my life?" said he to himself, as, with eyes blinded by emotion, he turned from the gay scene; "is such to be the oblivion of all that I took so much pains to acquire? Such, the grave of talents, my too partial relations cherished with so

many hopes? My boasting ambition! Where has it led me? Oh, Wharton, what will you see me now? Crushed in spirit, and bowed with servitude; cheated into vassalage; and chained to an employment, that any hireling might perform as honourably! For, what trust is confided in me? I copy an unknown character; from whom, and to whom, I am completely ignorant. No, it cannot be the will of my father, thus to degrade and sacrifice his son!"

With these thoughts goading his fevered nerves, un-noting the way he went, he hurried from the Danube. By accident he took the path to the Chateau, and his guide, marvelling at the fitful humours of the young secretary, followed in silence. With a pulse in every vein, and feelings exasperated at the present, from immediate comparison with the past, and yearning for the moment of throwing himself into the arms of Wharton; as if that one embrace would re-

store to him at once, his liberty, his country, and his friends; Louis did not recover his attention to visible objects, till he found himself again within the dreary walls of the Chateau. He locked himself into the room of his labour, and throwing himself on the floor, gave way to the regrets that overwhelmed him in unrestrained floods of bitter tears. In Lindisfarne, he had wept in tenderness and in sorrow. He had known the pangs of parting, and given the tribute of his tears to the racking moment. But he had never felt completely unmanned until now.

Hour passed over hour; Gerard knocked at the door, to announce that his solitary meal was prepared, but he knocked unheeded. At last, the deepening glooms of evening enclosing him in darkness, reminded him the day was past, and that his demanded task of the morning was yet to begin. Aware that the man, whom he was required to revere as

a guardian, but whom the pangs of recollection made him now abhor as a tyrant, would exact it from him at midnight; he started from the ground. At that moment of self-recall to labour, the yoke of bondage pressed with insupportable weight upon his soul.

“ I will not endure it ! ” cried he, “ why should I immure myself like a condemned wretch ? Shut up in solitude, fastened to the duty of a machine ; Without sound of human voice, but that of my hard task-master ! Without breathing the free air of Heaven ; unless accompanied with lackies ! Is this a fate, chosen by the Baron de Ripperda for his son, his only son ? It is mockery, and I will not endure it . ”

The fever in his blood, exaggerated to his perturbed mind every mysterious circumstance in his situation. He might be now the unconscious instrument of treason, or the cheated agent of political treachery. His father's confidence might

be abused by the impenetrable Ignatius, and he be ignorant, alike of his son's being at Vienna, and of the illiterate drudgery to which he was consigned.

All this seemed the strange effect of Louis having seen Duke Wharton. But much sprung from a distempered imagination, and disordered nerves; the consequence of loneliness, want of exercise, and long confinement in a deleterious atmosphere. However, the sudden appearance of Wharton was certainly the circumstance which at once awoke all his sensibilities to the perception of his changed state; of the liberty he had been persuaded to relinquish, of the liberty he might, perhaps, regain by the Duke's interference. The last idea was a vague one, but still it was visible; it had a shadowy existence between hope and despair, and Louis clasped at the delusive shade.

A prey to these confused imaginations, he could not command either the desire

or the power to resume his labours. Leaning his throbbing head upon the table, he allowed the gloom of black night to surround him; without even the wish to dispel it, by going into the adjoining room for one of the candles which had been for so many hours burning to waste.

As the old clock of the mansion struck ten, he was aroused from his moody position by a gleam of light. He looked up, and saw the *Sieur Ignatius* standing before him, with a lamp in his hand.

Louis started, disordered, from his chair.

“What is the meaning of this?” asked the *Sieur*, in a kindly voice; “I fear you are seriously ill.”

Louis, in attempting to speak, was agitated to suffocation. *Ignatius* fixed his eyes on his haggard countenance.

“Your zeal has over-wrought your strength. Health is as necessary as will, to the completion of your duty. In these

respects you must learn to be an economical, as well as a generous servant to your country; for that is the only way to be an efficient one. I see you have been too ill to prepare this night's papers."

The unusual interest in his feelings, which this address intimated; and the perfect confidence in his will to perform, what he had not done, smote on the heart of Louis; and, embarrassed and miserable, he bowed in silence.

"Sit down," continued the *Sieur*, evidently struck with the changed appearance of his charge; "I was improvident not to calculate on the ardour of your character, and give you orders to make pauses in your work, and take daily exercise in the garden. I ought to have thought on the garden before; for your walk of to-day without the walls, has already been productive of vexation. You have been seen, and to my great em-

barrassment, recognised. Have you any idea by whom?"

"By the Duke of Wharton," returned Louis, with all the recollections of that moment flushing his cheek; "I saw him on the Danube."

"And you saluted him first?" demanded Ignatius.

"No;" answered Louis, "but I turned to a voice calling on my name through the crowd, and met the eyes of my friend."

"And he recognised you, and you him?"

"We did."

"Mischief upon mischief!" ejaculated the Sieur, starting from his chair, and striding across the room in extraordinary discomposure. He turned suddenly upon Louis. — "So thoroughly did I believe you incapable of conduct so inconsistent with your awful engagements, that I have absolutely contradicted the mutual

recognition. On being told of it to-night by the Emperor's confessor, and the inferences drawn from the fact; I empowered him to affirm that he knew from an authority he could not dispute, that Louis de Montemar *was not in Vienna*; and that whoever had occasioned the report, must have mistaken some other person for the son of the Baron de Ripperda. Think then, faithless boy, into what a dilemma your recognition of Duke Wharton has brought the friend of your father! Into what a danger you have precipitated the cause, in which that father has embarked his fortunes and his life!"

"Sir," said Louis, with the dignity of conscious probity answering a man who had so lately put his affirmation to a falsehood; "my office here is inconsistent with my awful engagements. I bound myself to the dedication of all my talents, all the energies of my mind and heart, to the service of my father's country,

now become mine; and to be obedient to him, as its agent. But I find myself, and all these talents, few or many, which have been the labour of my life to cultivate, chained down to the one mechanical act of writing on this table, in a character unknown to me, and on subjects concerning which I am as ignorant as the messenger that carries them to and fro! I am not treated with the confidence of a son, but the suspicion of a slave; and I have my doubts that I am really so degraded by the commands of my father."

"This is new language Louis de Montemar! You have spoken with the Duke of Wharton. He knows all that you know: and he has put this complexion on the affair! well he knows how to sap and to overturn — and a fit agent for a father's ruin, he has found in the son of the Baron de Ripperda."

As the terrible Ignatius delivered this, he approached close to Louis, and seiz-

ing his arm, fixed on him his powerful eyes, as if to look into his soul.

“ I can bear your scrutiny, Sir,” said he, “ were you to rip open my breast with the poniard your hand rests upon. It is not in me to betray any man. I have not spoken with Duke Wharton.”

“ And you must not,” returned the Sieur, recovering his presence of mind, and dropping his hand from the dagger's hilt he had unconsciously grasped ; “ you must avoid, avoid even the chance of his seeing you again. You are ill, and you are moody. You require air and action ; and you shall have them : but henceforth they must be found in the garden of the Chateau. Be obedient to this necessity ; and I will forget the phrenzied language, which, if not Wharton, some demon must have conjured, to betray your reason and your duty.”

“ Sir,” replied Louis, in great emotion ; “ I do not wish you to forget it. I wish you to answer me to all its points.

I wish to know at once, whether I am a trusted servant, or an abused slave? Trust me, and that labour will be happiness — distinction! — which is now misery, and degradation insupportable!”

For some time the lofty Ignatius regarded his pupil's almost convulsed features with a steady perusal of their varying expressions. — At last, putting his hand on the shoulder of Louis, he said in a calm voice; “Compose yourself; and listen to me. Hear from my lips, truths that must be your future guide in the destiny you have chosen; but to combat with the evils of which, you come totally unprovided. You have educated yourself for the service of your country. — You are full of ardour to engage in it. But how? Not as she directs; but as yourself chooses. You would fight her battles in the field of blood; you would fill her cars of triumph! But you disdain to watch for her in secret, to labour in obscurity for

her ultimate peace. This last, is virtue in her purest simplicity; and, therefore, your father awarded to the virgin honour of his son, the unblemished sacrifice.”

Louis believed that he now, indeed, listened to truth. But why did he, who could impress it so powerfully, why did he utter so mean a denial of the fact, as to affirm that the son of Baron de Ripperda was not in Vienna?

The prompt intelligence of the *Sieur's* rapid glance, had seen the effect of this assertion on the mind of his pupil; and while he pursued his remarks on what had passed, he noticed the equivocation he had made, as a common style in diplomacy: “your being in the suburbs, and not in Vienna,” said he, “afforded me the advantage of this ambiguity. Always hold in mind, that no advantage, however trivial, is contemptible to a negotiator. The smallest causes often produce the greatest effects.

Alberoni's mysterious policy, which held Europe in awe for five years, was revealed and destroyed in one moment by the dropping of his courier's cloak-bag into a river !”

While Louis sighed to think, that subterfuge could ever be a duty, he was filled with ingenuous shame at the suspicions he had dared to proclaim ; at the reproaches with which his impatient doubts, and personal feelings, had provoked him to insult the trusted friend of his father. The forbearance of the *Sieur Ignatius*, under this unexpected flood of impassioned violence, augmented the contrition of the disordered offender ; and when he rose to withdraw, Louis could only say, “ bear with me this night. I am incapable of speaking — almost of thinking — but bear with me ! and to-morrow, you shall find that I have not listened in vain.”

CHAP. II.

NEXT day found Louis in a state far from tranquillized. Thorough dissatisfaction with himself, had prevented his eyes closing during the night; and he arose in the morning, only to continue his self-accusations. He condemned the indulgence of feelings so inconsistent with his usual candour in dubious circumstances, and which had hurried him, not only into an unreasonable despair of his own situation, but, with the most dishonouring suspicions, to provoke the man, who, it was madness to doubt, was the confidential colleague of the Baron de Ripperda. And yet, while he vowed to himself, that no privation of air or action, no solitude and monotony of life, should ever excite him to a second

murmur; while he panted for the moment in which he might repair, by a full apology to the Sieur, the indignity he had cast upon him; he could not warm the chill at his heart, when he recollected that the first amends Ignatius was likely to demand of him, would be to relinquish all hope of seeing the Duke of Wharton.

This conviction threw his still agitated mind into tumults. In the parting interview between him and Mr. Athelstone, that venerable man had taken off the absolute terms of his interdiction respecting the Duke. In the wide and busy world, his nephew and Wharton might meet again; and in circumstances that Louis could not bend to his promise of avoidance. On this ground, the Pastor now left him to his own discretion. "But, remember," added he, "it is to your *discretion!*"

Louis thought on this licence from his revered uncle, with the outstretching

arms of his soul towards his beloved friend ; and, he vainly pursued his laborious penmanship, to get rid of the attendant ideas. The well-known voice, calling on him through the crowd, haunted his ear. Again, and again, the form of his friend, leaning towards him from the car, rose before him. He threw down his pen, and rested his working brain upon his hand. He could not recollect how Wharton looked, for he had not seen how he looked ; all that his glad eyes had taken in of that dear apparition, was, that it was him ! That it was his resplendent countenance which shone on him from that gay eminence !

“ And I must not see it again !” cried Louis, “ all with whom I am connected, seem leagued at one time or other to exclude him from my society. But they never can shut him from my heart. His gracious selection of me, from a crowd, older and of more approved merit than myself ; his own distinguished qualities

and irrepressible confidence in my honour, have bound me to love him through a life that is condemned to fly him, as if he were my direst enemy."

Louis opened his writing-case to recreate his eyes with the sight of Wharton's letter, that he might hear him speak through that at least; but as soon as he touched it, and saw the superscription, whose characters again recalled the image of the writer, and with it the home in which he had first read the letter; he dropped it back into the case.

"I will not further un-nerve myself," cried he, "by pressing memory on my heart! I will not pervert hours of past happiness to the purposes of present wretchedness. I must remember that I am called to self-denial; and you, dear generous Wharton! fated to be my first, are to continue my repeated sacrifice."

Louis was found at noon by his punctual visitor, seated at his desk with his former diligence. A slight hectic co-

loured his cheek as he rose to receive him. — The Sieur smiled. Louis again saw the heaven open, which had beguiled him into confidence on his first arrival, and this smile was not so flitting as its predecessor. It dwelt on his features like a bending seraph lingering on its cloud.

“ Louis,” cried he, “ I come to trust you.”

Louis caught the hand which was extended to him, and pressed it to his lips.

“ I come to trust you,” said he, “ but not as I see you expect ; I come to call again upon your faith, to fulfil the whole of this affair, while you must yet remain ignorant of its particular purpose ; to *trust in your honour*, that you will not further doubt the integrity of the man on whom your father has conferred confidence without reserve. His interests and mine are united, never to be separated in this world : we rise, or we fall

together. You redden Louis! But I do not trifle with you. It is possible that accident, if not design, may betray a scheme of such important bearings; and I will not leave it in the power of malice to accuse the son of Baron de Ripperda of treachery, or of imprudence in such a case."

"My recent conduct," replied he, "gives you no reliance on my prudence; and you believe me unworthy of fuller confidence."

"No, Louis, — that I still hold you in ignorance, is a greater proof of my dependence on your fidelity, than if I bound your personal interests with your honour, by unfolding to you any part of the glorious plan on which you are employed. Your oath ties your conscience to the fulfilment of your duty, but I want your free-will. I want, what I thought I had. The open eye of faith in the virtue of your cause, — the forward hand of zealous devotedness in the execution. Give

me your mind, Louis, and I shall no longer see that changing cheek and languid frame? Zeal is life."

"Again I pledge myself," returned he, "I will be all you require, only trust me!" Then with a sudden paleness displacing the flush of resolution, and with a forced smile, he added, "I know I must prove my sincerity by a victim; and I yield a dear one. I will not see the Duke of Wharton, till you or my father grant me that privilege."

"To see him," replied the Sieur, resuming his usual austerity, "it is probable you may one day have perfect liberty, but never to cultivate his friendship."

"How? — Wherefore?"

"He is the enemy of ~~you~~ to believe
"Ond gladly make my father his
friend."

The moment ~~this~~ had escaped him, Louis ~~could~~ have plucked his tongue out for having uttered so inconsiderate a

speech ; so much did he fear that Ignatius would immediately demand what was that reason. But for once, the sagacious politician lost an opportunity of acquiring information respecting the views of a rival. Absorbed in the haughty consciousness of his own pre-eminence, he did not put the dreaded question, but with a scornful motion of his lips, replied. —

“ I doubt it not. — But Philip Wharton would purchase without gold. He may defraud, but he cannot bestow.”

“ I do not understand you, Sir ?”

“ Future events will speak plainly,” returned the *Sieur*, “ and meanwhile, ~~rely on your~~ engagement to avoid him.”

in his bosom, and with indignant rising bowed his head in ratification of his promise.

Ignatius turned to the table, and gathering up the manuscripts prepared

for him, told his now silent companion, that he need not resume his labours till he had taken the air on the terrace. "But," added he, "you must not forget that for every day, until I direct otherwise, the garden is your utmost limits."

"I shall not wish to extend them," replied Louis, with a resigned but lofty bow, and the Sieur left the room.

With his expanding heart again closed by the repulsive demeanor of his governor, Louis saw him depart. A feeling of complete desolation spread over his soul. Without having found comfort in his presence, he felt a more dreary loneliness when he was gone, as the hope of winning at all on his unbending nature, seemed utterly at an end. He had tried it, by anticipating what he knew would be exacted, the resignation of his friend. But Ignatius had received the sacrifice, not merely without sensibility, but with the most unsparing remarks. The tender care with which all his good dispositions had

been fostered by the secluded guardians of his youth, made him doubly feel how sterile is the communion of the world. Interest may bind man to man, and extort the convenience of virtue; but affection is not there, to nourish or to reward its growth.

“ Misjudging Ignatius! he demands my mind, when he might have my heart! I would love him, but he will not let me. In vain I watched for another of those smiles; the first, I hailed on my arrival as an earnest of a gracious master! And the second, which greeted me to-day, as a pledge of forgiveness of my yesterday's impatience, how soon was it displaced by the hard aspect of despotic command! But I deserve it, “ exclaimed he,” did not my humiliation, at having so frantically rebelled, vanish as soon? I was even on the point of a second violence, had not some good angel stilled the tumult in my breast.”

Having walked his dismal apartment some time, continuing the same soliloquy, he threw himself into a chair to compose his mind, and to confirm it. He arraigned himself for the weakness of his present discontents, and summoned his best reason to the forming a steady resolution of pursuing his duty upon the principle of enduring as well as acting. He reviewed the past and the present with an impartial eye; and where he saw he failed, condemned himself with an inexorable judgement.

In this hour's communing with himself, he found how different is the real from the imaginary contest; how wise is speculation, how absurd practice; how easy profession, how difficult performance; and that of all conquests, that of reason over a refractory heart, is the hardest to acquire. After these humbling reflections, he walked forth a victor, though a wounded one, to cheer himself with the glories of the setting sun. Its

reclining orb had never failed to recall the compact which his heart had made, when he beheld it for the last time on the verge of his native hills. But this evening, its mild religious light, gradually withdrawing into the clouds, as the golden disk sunk beneath the earth, reminded him so touchedly of the venerable saint whose emblem he had called it, that he could not forbear exclaiming,

“ Yes, my revered uncle ! Those pious hands shall not always be raised in vain. I trust, that henceforth I shall do my duty in a manner more befitting the character you fondly believed mine ; but on which, recent experience has too repeatedly shewn me, how slight ought to have been my dependance. For your sake, dear instructor of my youth ! I will do all, and be all, that is required of me. I will forget your graciousness, that, in this land of severity, I may act worthy of your hopes. *They who led me away cap-*

tive, require of me a song, and melody in my heaviness! and, for thine honour, gentlest of human beings, I will *take my harp from the willows*, and be as happy as this stubborn heart will let me.”

For several succeeding weeks, Louis steadily obeyed the law he had enjoined himself. The exasperation of his mind gradually subsided; his awakened sensibilities sunk to repose; and he concentrated his thoughts as much as possible upon his unchanging toil. As he constantly passed part of every day in the open air, he found companions, and even social ones, in the birds he fed with the crumbs from his breakfast. Their grateful chirpings were cheerful; and as he paced the snows of the garden, his blood regained its vigour, and the elasticity of his spirits revived. Again his cheek wore the brightness of health; and his volant step, too often reminded him how narrow were his boundaries. His eye, however, was yet free to range; and its excursions

were wide as the horizon. It sought the heights of Mount Calemborg, whose hoary summits mingled with the hazy west; or when the winter day put on a fairer garb, he contemplated their snowy peaks piercing the glittering sky, and cloathed in all its splendor. A little convent, like *Paraclete's white walls and silver springs*, stood in an umbrageous cleft of the mountain; whose icicled trees, and frozen stream, promise a luxuriant scene in verdant summer.

But Mount Calemborg, with all its beauties, was not as fair to him, as cloud-capt Cheviot, clad in her storms, and standing sublime amidst the roaring torrent, and the shouts of the hunters echoing from her hills. He sighed for the joyous chace, for the jocund hour of return. He thought the voices of his uncle's boon companions, would no more sound discordant in his ear; even for the cry of their dogs, and their own loud halloos, reverberating from the walls of

the old hall of Bamborough, what would he now give?

“Churl that I was,” cried he, “not to allow people to be happy, but in my own way! And fool too, to despise them for being happy, with the humbler talents bestowed on them by the God of nature!”

Louis blushed to feel, that we must suffer, to value all that is bestowed.

His wandering eye could not elude the attraction of another point. It often turned to the yet frozen Danube, and tried, by straining its powers, to discern amongst the variegated groups, any thing like the person of his interdicted friend; but he gazed in vain. The river was too distant to distinguish individuals; and all he saw, was a moving pageantry, which might interest, but could never satisfy him, as it was probable it contained Wharton, and it was impossible for him to see him, if it did.

Louis was constant in these walks, and

the Sieur as regular in his evening visits. The one, always greeted his governor with cheerfulness; and the other, his pupil, with a stateliness, which shewed approbation, only by silence from reproof. But Louis was content, and the whole glided smoothly on.

The name of Wharton never occurred between them, to disturb the unruffled surface, but once; and that was occasioned by the Duke's parting letter to Louis, dropping out of his private portfolio, one evening when Ignatius asked if he could furnish him with a sheet of paper bearing the English water-mark. As the letter fell with the seal to the floor, the Sieur's observing eye recognised the hand-writing, and, though unused to the bending mood, he stooped to take it up.

“ You have corresponded with Wharton!” cried he, holding the letter in his hand; “ what, did he tell you, was his object in leaving England last autumn?”

“Nothing, Sir;” replied Louis, stretching out his hand rather too eagerly to receive the letter; but Ignatius retained it. “That was the first, and the only letter, with which he ever honoured me.”

“It is in answer then, to one from yourself?”

“No; I have never written to him. That was sent to me the night he quitted England, to go——he did not say whether; and so the correspondence ended.”

“And, as certainly, he did not desire its continuance,” replied the *Sieur*. He observed Louis start, and redden with an air of offended incredulity. “Else why,” resumed he, “did he omit naming to you the place of his destination? But,” added he, throwing the letter contemptuously on the table, “Wharton was always a creature of caprice, and you will not be the last ball his racket will strike out of his careing.”

Stung with the sarcasm of this remark,

mortified at being supposed liable to such trifling, and jealous for the sincerity of his friend, with flashing eyes Louis took up the letter, and held it silently in his hand. He stood a few minutes, struggling to subdue the resentment that was ready to burst from his lips. The Sieur appeared to have already forgotten the matter, and was calmly examining the manuscripts on the table. This apathy was more galling, than perhaps further remark. Louis pressed on his swelling heart the recollection of the vow he had made to himself; *to bear all*, as well as *to do all*, the will of this arrogant man; and turning towards his port-folio, he was replacing the letter in the case, when Ignatius looking up, said in a voice that was careless of being heard,

“ It is pity, to see ingenuous youth treasure a counterfeit, for true metal.”

“ Your observation, Sir,” said Louis, “ does not touch the Duke of Wharton.”

“ But it might you ————”

answered the *Sieur*, “ for you hold a proof of his ephemeral attachments, in your hand.”

Louis felt an instant impulse to disprove at once this contemptuous inference, by requesting Ignatius to read the Duke's letter ; but the next moment he bethought him, whether there were ought in the contents his misjudged friend might wish not to be exposed to an enemy. For such, he could not but perceive the inveterate Ignatius was to Wharton. There was a mixture of malignant contempt, with evident apprehension of his influence somewhere, which marked the sentiment the *Sieur* entertained for him ; but whether from personal dislike, or solely on account of the asserted hostility between him and Baron de Ripperda, Louis could not be sure ; though he certainly saw hatred in his governor's deeply sunken eyes, whenever he spoke of the Duke.

To persist in silence, seemed to Louis

to be sanctioning these calumnies on his friend, and to continue asserting without offering proof, he was aware would only redouble the scorn of his antagonist. Placed in a torturing dilemma, he stood recollecting whether the contents of the Duke's letter were such that he might safely shew ; when the Sieur, rising from his seat, said in an exasperating tone of pity ; " put up your relic, Louis ! though I see you are properly ashamed of a credulity too natural to the vanity of youth."

" No, Sir ;" returned he, opening the letter with a trembling hand ; " I should detest myself, if I thought I had a spark within me of any thing so mean as vanity. But if I had, Duke Wharton is of too noble a nature to play upon credulity so worthless. That letter, Sir, if you will condescend to read it, will shew you that I am honoured with his friendship."

Ignatius had now wrought Louis to the point at which he aimed, but main

taining his air of indifference, he took the letter from the agitated hand of his pupil, without observation. Louis presented it with a proud look, and stood as proudly watching his countenance while he read it. The *Sieur* went over it twice; he then coldly returned it, with the remark, "it is beyond my skill to expound so curious a riddle, but as you are his friend, you doubtless have a key?"

All the self-confidence, which a moment before had dilated the indignant heart of Louis, fell in an instant. He did not anticipate this sort of observation on the letter, and alarmed at the impressions which must have given rise to it, he stood in speechless embarrassment.

"This piece of paper," continued Ignatius, "is mere nonsense to me; and proves nothing, of what you to wish prove, unless you can do it by explaining its meaning?"

Louis remained silent.

The *Sieur* proceeded: — "You ought

not to have put such seeming foolery into my hands, unless you were prepared to be its commentary."

"Then return it to me, Sir," cried Louis, overwhelmed with confusion, "and forget that you have seen it."

"I never forget any thing that I have seen, and, I am not to be trifled with. You have called my attention to this letter; you have shewn it to me, as a proof of Duke Wharton's confidence in you: but I see only a farrago of words, which, you have now pledged yourself to put into reasonable meaning by your explanation."

Louis's consternation was so great, at so unlooked for a consequence of what he had done, that he could not recollect what he had said, or might have implied to the Sieur; and he continued to gaze on the ground, humbled to the dust. "Oh!" cried he, in the depths of his soul, "was I then under the immediate control of detested, mischievous

vanity, at the very moment I disclaimed its presence in my heart! Wretch that I am, to have been betrayed by any motive, to open the faintest glimmering of light upon the secrets of my friend, to this inexorable man!"

The recollection of Wharton's words, *I put my life into your hands!* rose before his mental sight in characters of blood; and turning sick at heart, he supported a momentary failure of his limbs, by grasping the back of a chair. The sight of this agitation only stimulated the curiosity of Ignatius, or, whatever else it was that impelled him to persecute his unoffending charge to such a point of distress. — He resumed.

“ You have gone too far, to be silent now. I can comprehend, that certain phrases in this enigmatical epistle, refer to former conferences with you. Brutus and Cassius are not usually masquing names in affairs of gallantry, therefore, the nature of your mutual confidence I

can guess; and it is necessary for your own, as well as the Duke's honour, that you should tell me their object."

"Sir" said Louis, "I have already done too much for my own honour.—The Duke's can never be injured by any thing I can say or withhold. And, I will mention his name no more."

"Young man," said Ignatius, "you must not add obstinacy to rashness. You have allowed yourself to be made privy to the schemes of a man who is suspected by his country! Be aware, that to conceal treason, is to share it."

Louis did not speak.

The Sieur continued: "Besides, you are answerable to your country, and to your father, who has devoted you with himself, to her interests, to reveal to him, as to your confessor, every event of your life. Much more, then, a circumstance like this. For, on your father's intimate acquaintance with every political device which could possibly disturb

Europe, depends his guiding to perfection the mighty machine he is now constructing to give peace to the world. Hence, the glory of your father, as well as your vow to Spain, commands you to bend all minor considerations to the great duty of your life; and to confide to him, through me, every confidence of a political nature which has passed between you and the Duke of Wharton."

"The glory of my father," replied Louis, "can never be augmented by his son's faithlessness. And could Spain require such a proof of my attachment to her, the law of God, which is the everlasting appeal from all human ordinances, would sanction me in abjuring my vow!"

"You grant that Wharton has engaged your faithfulness! A secret implied, is a secret revealed; and further withholding a full acknowledgement, is finesse with me, and irreverence to your father. The Duke left Vienna a few

weeks ago, secretly, and I have reason to believe, you could guess whither he is gone?"

"Sir," answered Louis, "I neither say, nor do not say, that I have been honoured with any confidence whatever, by the Duke of Wharton; but I repeat, that neither to my father, nor to any man living, do I think it necessary to betray a trust in me. Therefore, as I cannot repeat discourses I have never heard, and will not repeat discourses confided to me; you cannot be surprized that I hold my peace. My inconsideration, to give it the mildest appellation, has gone far enough, in shewing Duke Wharton's letter, however indifferent its subject, without his permission."

The Sieur fixed his investigating eye upon the determined brow of his pupil.

"Louis de Montemar," cried he, "you have imprudence enough in your composition to ruin a state; and sufficient stubbornness of what you call

Honour, to ensure your own destruction. If you do not mean to relax the one, you must learn to confirm your mind against the wild influence of the other. Act less from passion, and more from principle. Be wary of friend, as well as foe; and never speak from your heart, till your words have paused in your head, to take the judgment of your circumspection. Had you shewn this letter to one less interested in your welfare, than your father's friend, the suspicion its style would have awakened, might have wrought consequences ruinous to the Duke, and not much less full of evil to yourself. I shall now drop the subject for ever, because I see that you will not neglect its lesson."

With the gratitude of one escaped from a snare, into which he thought he had desperately, and therefore blameably rushed, Louis took the letter, which the Sieur presented to him. His ingenuous cheek flushed with displea-

sure at himself for having been beguiled, rather than at the subtle trier of his wariness ; and respectfully, though silently, he bowed his head to his unanswerable monitor. Ignatius fell immediately into his usual abstracted mood, and soon after left the room.

CHAP. III.

THREE days after this discussion, Louis had just seated himself at his morning task, when he heard a knock at the chamber door. This was an unusual circumstance, for Gerard never approached with such signal, but at the hours when his stroke was to announce the frugal repast in the adjoining apartment. The Sieur always entered with his own key; and this was a time of the day he never visited the Chateau. Louis thought it could be no summons to him, and that probably Gerard had accidentally occasioned the noise in passing. But in another minute, he heard a second knock, louder than the former. He then rose to see what it was, and to his surprise beheld Castanos; whom he

had not seen, or heard of, since his departure with the dispatches for Spain.

Hoping to hear news of his father ; and that his letter to Don Ferdinand had reached him in safety ; Louis eagerly bade him welcome from Madrid. With a deepened gloom on his always sullen countenance, Castanos roughly interrupted him. —

“ I am sent to tell you, Senor, that the *Sieur Ignatius* is at the point of death.”

“ Impossible !” cried Louis, “ he was not here yesterday ; but I saw him the evening before, in perfect health.”

“ Last night he was stabbed in the porch of the Jesuits' College,” returned Castanos.

Louis's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, as grasping the arm of his unfeeling informant, he seemed to demand, who had done it ? For once in his life, the morose Spaniard suffered his half-closed eyes to look directly on the face of

a fellow-creature. He was not insensible to the horror depicted on Louis, and in more humane accents replied —

“ Villains way-laid him in the porch at the outer gate of the College, where he always quits his carriage. They closed on him : but he struggled, and drew his dagger. The business, however, was soon over ; for the stroke of some heavy weapon felled him to the ground ; and while he lay insensible, to make sure work, they stabbed him, and fled. But the drawn blood did a service not intended. — It recovered my lord Ignatius from his swoon ; and he managed to stagger to the gate, and gain admittance. When I was sent for to his chamber, which was not till this morning, I found surgeons and a priest with him ; and they declare his wounds dangerous.”

“ And am I not to see him ?” cried Louis, forgetting his hard task-master, in the image of a fellow-creature dying by murder ; that fellow-creature was his

father's friend ; and he repeated, " may I not go to him ?"

" I came to bring you to him," replied Castanos.

Shocked as he was by the horrid recital, Louis felt an emotion of pleasure at this summons. To be to his severe, but he believed upright guardian, a more soothing attendant than was in the power, if indeed in the will of the rugged Spaniard, gave a generous satisfaction to his heart. Having carefully locked the chamber which contained the secret papers ; that, whether the *Sieur* lived or died, his injunctions might be equally respected ; Louis accompanied his old conductor to a carriage which awaited them in the court-yard.

While driving down the avenue, and crossing the esplanade into the city, both Louis and his companion were lost in thought. At last the former, hardly conscious of giving utterance to his meditations suddenly asked Castanos whether he had any idea of the motive of this horrid deed

“Not robbery,” replied the Spaniard; “they never stopped for plunder. They wanted his life. And, I believe, we may curse the jealousy of your father’s political enemies for the motive. I brought my dispatches from Madrid yesterday morning; and yesterday night these daggers were at work.”

“But how,” returned Louis, “can the death of the *Sieur Ignatius* be of such moment to my father’s enemies, that they should load their souls with this assassination, and leave my father alive?”

“*Senor*,” said *Castanos*, “you know little of politicians. The agents of such rivals are always in danger. So you will do well to look to yourself.”

“No man knows me in this capital.”

“But some may know your employment; and that is the object of grudge. — Since the *stiletto* has reached our master, we know not how far it may be from ourselves.”

Louis could not bid him not fear; for

the assault on their employer proved that danger was connected with their situation ; and being ignorant of what that situation really was, he could not foresee whence the danger might issue, nor how it might be repelled. He therefore made no reply ; neither did he ask any more questions of a man, who, when he did break his sullen taciturnity, was ever more inclined to engloom an evil prospect, than to cheer it with a ray of hope.

The silence that ensued, was not interrupted till the carriage drew up before a colossal column, surmounted by a bronze statue of the Virgin Mary, and in front of which stretched the dark walls of the College. At the portico they alighted.

“ Here,” muttered Castanos, “ is the place of blood ; and its marks are yet on the stones.”

As he said, Louis saw ; for it might be tracked from the spot where he supposed the Sieur had fallen, to where he rose and made his way to the gate. Louis

shuddered at such a proof of the most dreadful part of the Spaniard's tale, and hastened to follow him through the porch. He entered a large quadrangle, surrounded by cloisters. As they proceeded, Louis perceived several persons in dark monastic habits, walking to and fro under the colonades. When he approached, they eyed him with curiosity; and when two or three were together, they whispered as he passed. Castanos seemed vexed by this notice; but without remarking on it, hurried his companion towards a great door at the extremity of one of the cloisters. He struck it with his clenched hand, and it was instantly opened by a man, who Louis recognised to be Martini, the servant who had attended him in his only walk beyond the walls of the Chateau. He immediately enquired whether the Sieur had undergone any change since Castanos left him.

“ No, Signor. The Superior of the

College is with him now, but he is impatient for your arrival."

"Shew me to his apartment," cried Louis; and following with fleet steps the long strides of the Italian, the father of the Jesuits met him, as he passed into the presence of the wounded Ignatius.

The chamber was then left entirely to the invalid, and to the conference he had so strenuously desired to have with his secretary. Louis advanced into the room. Ignatius lay on a low couch, which, from its form and sombre appointments, looked more like a bier for the dead, than a bed of rest for the living. It stood in the center of an arched cove at the end of the apartment. Louis approached in speechless awe. As he drew near, he saw the body of the Sieur extended under the coverlid, in the position he should have expected had he been to find him in his shroud. His head lay flat on the pillow, and was so veiled in a black cowl, nothing could

be discerned of his face, but his ashy lips and grizzled beard.

Ignatius knew the step that so cautiously drew near his bed, and feebly raising the arm, which his pupil now saw had lain enveloped in black upon the dark coverlid, he put out his hand to him. Louis clasped it gently in his, but forbore to speak. He felt himself pressed by the cold fingers of Ignatius; and there was an expression in the touch that said, he understood his sympathy. Louis bent his head to that not silent hand, and put it to his lips.

“ Son of Ripperda,” said the Sieur, in a low agitated voice; “ thou hast a kindly heart !”

“ The son of Ripperda,” replied Louis, “ could not feel otherwise towards the friend of his father. But I would devote myself to watch this couch, for the Sieur Ignatius’s own sake.” Again he felt his hand pressed by the wounded man; and the smile, which was once so beautiful,

fitted over his shrouded countenance like a departing spirit. Louis turned icy cold. He had never seen any one on a death-bed; and that spectacle, which he believed was now before him, shivered him to the soul.

“Louis,” said the *Sieur*, after a pause, “I have not summoned you hither, to wait upon the tedious hours of my recovery, but to perform my part in the place, where jealousy of my success has brought me to this. You must go to the Imperial palace; I am expected there in the course of an hour; for none there yet know of this assassination. You must see the Empress, and acquaint her with what has happened. With difficulty I have written these few hardly legible lines, to assure her she may trust you with any confidential paper or message to me; and she too well knows my writing, to doubt their authenticity. My surgeons say little to encourage hope, but tell Her Majesty, I feel a life in my

heart, that her enemies and mine have not been able to reach!"

Ignatius spoke this at intervals, checked at each sentence by internal spasms from his most dangerous wound. But he shewed a vehemence at the close, which his pupil had never before witnessed in his tempered discourse. More than his usual caution seemed taken from his lips, and as Louis apprehended the approach of delirium, he felt the hand which still clasped his, flash at once into a scorching heat. The agitated speaker gasped for breath, but after a momentary pause he began again, and with rapid utterance went through a train of directions, to guide his pupil in his conference with the Empress. In the midst of the most energetic part of his discourse, his lip became convulsed, he suddenly stopped, and dropping the hand he held, seemed as if seized at once by the grasp of death. Louis sprang forward, to give air to the enveloped face, but the moment Ignatius

felt the attempt to withdraw his cowl, he arrested the hand that touched it, and said in a stifled voice: "do not be alarmed, I am not dying, but in pain. The villains struck well through my side, but not quite home!—Go," continued he, "you will find Martini in the anti-chamber. He has my orders to attend you to the palace. You will then be conducted to the Altheim apartments; shew that card to the page at the door, (it is written by the Empress's own hand, to admit the possessor,) and he will immediately obey its command. In those apartments you will see the Imperial Elizabeth."

Louis had been under no inconsiderable degree of surprize during many parts of this discourse. Until now, he had supposed that the agency of Ignatius was directed to some of the Austrian ministers, whom his father probably wished to bring over to the present views of Spain. He could hardly have suspected that so

much caution and peril could be connected with any negotiation in which the sovereigns themselves were principles; and that they should be principles, was astonishing in itself. The Emperor's claims on the throne of Spain, and Philip's repugnance to the Austrian possession of the Netherlands, united with the pertinacious character of the two monarchs, and the usual turn of human passions, would have made Louis affirm, that no political adversaries could have been more naturally irreconcilable to amity between them; beyond occasional shews of peace.

However the Sieur Ignatius had borne a reverse testimony. His pupil could not doubt what he had said, and taking the credentials presented to him, he was rising to withdraw, when the wounded man impressively added; "remember, she alone knows that my secretary is Louis de Montemar. In the guard-room,

you will hear yourself announced as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg."

Louis stood silent, without moving another pace to the door; "Oh!" thought he, "another deception! How can that be right, which requires so much wrong to support it!"

Not hearing his step, the Sieur guessed what was passing in his mind. "I understand your hesitation," cried he, "though I cannot look on you; the wound in my head, will not suffer my eyes to endure the light. But Louis, you must not cross me at such an hour as this, with your romantic prejudices. Should any want of caution discover you to the eye or ear of an enemy, the blow that has only half reached me, may be made sure; and the failure of our scheme at this crisis, would sink your father's fame in everlasting dishonour."

"O! Sir," returned Louis, "I cannot connect dishonour with a scheme of vir-

tue, whatever may be its fortune! Is not my father labouring for the happiness of Spain? For the peace of the world? If I had no other repugnance, I cannot but shrink from giving up, even for an instant, such a name as his."

"Louis," resumed the Sieur, his voice and manner evidently raised by growing fever, "it is now in your power, and in yours alone, to keep that name your distinction, or to brand it as your disgrace. Schemes of policy have no character in the public mind, but according to their issue. If success attend this of the Baron de Ripperda, it will be sounded as a blessing to the nations; if it fail, obloquy will proclaim it a conspiracy worthy their curses. Concealment now, is present preservation, and victory hereafter. Remember, once for all, that diplomatic simulation is no falsehood. It is expected; and is no more a breach of honour, than an ambuscade in war. You are of the Chateau Phaffenberg, while

you reside in it. And thus we provide for consciences of more sensibility than judgement. If there be sin, it is on my head and your father's! Be satisfied with this, and depart on your duty."

Louis placed his hand on his heart, as he replied, "my honour cannot be satisfied by a quibble; nor my conscience with the responsibility of another man. But it is possible I may overstrain the principles I hope to live and die in; and therefore I obey."

As he left the room without further observation from the *Sieur*, the virtuous pupil of the pious minister of *Lindisfarne*, folded his hands together, and inwardly exclaimed; "these are labyrinths I never expected to tread! and may the God I would not offend, be the guide of my lips and of my actions!"

When he entered the anti-chamber, *Castanos* was sitting on a low bench sulkily smoking a *cegar*, and *Martini* stood near him, discoursing in a suppres-

sed voice, but with vehement gesticulation. On hearing the steps of Louis, the latter turned and caught up his hat. "I am at your command Signor;" and without waiting for the order, he led the way through the cloisters to the porch where the carriage stood. Louis stepped in; and he followed, with the familiarity of a man who felt his consequence in having been trusted with a confidence of no mean bearing.

They drove on; and by the looks which Martini occasionally threw towards him, Louis easily perceived his eagerness to be encouraged to speak. Martini was as anxious to be always an orator, as Castanos to maintain the character of a mute. But in the present case, Louis was too much possessed with what he had just seen, and what he might soon have to do, to be in any humour to gratify the conversational desires of his conductor. In proportion as his frank countenance was inviting to conversation, when he had no

inclination to repel it ; a dignified reserve, which few persons would dare disturb, occupied every feature when he wished to be left to his own thoughts. There was nothing severe in the look, but it had the air of one accustomed to deference ; and though Martini would rather have met the social smile which Louis wore on the Danube, he saw every thing to respect, but nothing to fear, in the tacit command of his countenance.

Attentive to the Sieur's minutest injunctions, when Louis followed his guide from the carriage into the palace, he folded his pelisse round him, and drawing the fur of his winter-cap down upon his face, walked on with little more than his eyes visible. On being saluted by the officer in the guard-chamber, Martini announced Louis as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, who required to be conducted to the Altheim apartments. A person was called to shew him the way, and as he turned to follow his guide,

Martini said aloud, "Chevalier, I await you in this chamber."

The man led him up the imperial staircase to a superb rotunda, whose pillared arcades branched in all directions into long galleries of equal magnificence. Through several of these, they took their way, and in some of them, a few persons were seen passing lightly and silently along, as if in the discharge of their respective services towards the numerous august inhabitants. Louis thought of the palace of Thebes; and as the smirking lips, but troubled brows, of these people met his eye, he could not but think how base and how miserable is the coveted bread of dependance.

He approached another of the many folding-doors which had led him from gallery to gallery; and on opening this, his guide told the page within to conduct the Chevalier de Phaffenberg to the Altheim apartment.

“ By what authority ? ” asked the page.

The person from the guard-room had turned away on his return ; but Louis, without speaking, presented the passport from the Empress. The youth bowed profoundly, and ushered him through a highly ornamented vestibule, into first one, and then into another saloon still more splendid. In the second, the page made another obeisance, and left him. The *Sieur* had instructed him, merely to shew the imperial signature, and not to ask for any body, but patiently to await, in this her private *boudoir*, the arrival of the Empress. He had therefore leisure to look around him, had his mind been sufficiently free from solicitude to derive amusement from the endless varieties of art and nature which decorated the place. In one part, an apparently interminable conservatory, blooming with all the flowers of summer, wafted its fragrance

towards him. In another, opened a deep alcove of entire mirror, which doubled the mimic garden; and in an opposite direction, a stretch of canopied arches discovered chamber after chamber, till the most capricious fancy might be sated with the gay variety.

Louis's eye hardly glanced along them, for he fell almost immediately into an awful meditation on the scene he had just left, on the probable death of the mysterious Ignatius; and, in the event of such a catastrophe, what might be the consequence to his father. Would the loss of so efficient an agent compel him to abandon his views? or would he come to Vienna, and finish in person what his murdered friend had so well begun? At the close of these melancholy cogitations, nothing but gloomy images presented themselves; the dark-cowled priests flitting around the bed of the dying Ignatius, and the dismal voice of Castanos, presaging a similar fate to the Baron him-

self! In the midst of these thoughts, he was startled by a sound in the adjoining chamber. He looked towards it, and saw a lady, splendidly attired, approaching him. Unused to courts, he hesitated whether he should go forward, or await her advance; but as she drew near, the amazing beauty he beheld, decided for him, and struck him motionless.

He had heard that the Empress was beautiful and young; but of any thing like this bloom of youth, this splendour of beauty, he had no expectation. It was more like the dream of the poet, than any *mortal mixture of earth's mould!* He stood as one lost to recollection. The lady did not seem less surprised, though certainly with less amazement. On her first approach to him, when he took his cap from his head, and his disengaged pelisse, falling back, discovered his youthful figure, she retreated a step; but the next moment advancing, with a smile of peculiar complacency, she observed,

that "there must be some mistake, for she came to meet a totally different person."

Louis tried to recover himself from the admiration her beauty had excited, to the ceremonial due to her rank, and bowing with disordered grace, he replied, "that he was sent by the person he believed Her Majesty expected to meet in that chamber; and that he came a messenger of distressing tidings. To say, that the *Sieur Ignatius* had been attacked by ruffians, and was then lying in extremity at the *Jesuits' College*."

The lady interrupted him; "Sir," said she, with an eager blush, "you have done me the honour to mistake me for the *Empress*, whom I am so happy as to serve; and being distinguished by my imperial mistress's confidence, I came hither to request the *Sieur Ignatius* (whose attendance she had required at this hour) to excuse her absence for a few minutes. She is with the *Emperor*,

and, when I deliver your message, will expect you to await her commands."

With these words, the lady curtsayed and withdrew.

Louis gazed on the track through which she had disappeared. A vision of some heavenly creature seemed to have passed before his eyes, to give him assurance of what really did exist in the angelic world! The apparition, the voice, had been seen and heard, and all was again solitude and silence! Was it possible, he asked himself, that any thing mortal could be so perfectly beautiful? that any thing earthly should be too bright to look upon? Lost in the amazement of his senses, he thought only of her; he had forgotten the majesty he came to visit, and almost the disastrous tale that was his errand, when steps again sounded in the adjoining apartment. He sprang towards the canopied arch; the curtains were draperied back by two golden caryates, and his eager eyes shot

beyond; but another form appeared! another lady! of beauty too; but blinded by excess of light, all other objects seemed dark and indistinct before him.

She was less magnificently arrayed than her fair messenger, but approached with so striking an air of dignity, that Louis could not hesitate believing this must be the Empress. Respectfully meeting her advancing steps, he bent his knee to her, as he presented the letter from the Sieur. At the moment of her approach, his bewildered faculties suddenly recollected that such was the attitude Ignatius told him, he must assume in delivering his credentials.

The Empress stood still, and looked steadfastly on him for several moments. Then taking the letter from his hand, in a voice of tender commiseration, she bade him rise.

“The lady I sent hither, has informed me of your melancholy embassy,” continued she, in the same gracious tone;

“but I trust he is not wounded past hope?”

“Not past his own,” replied Louis, as he rose from his knee; “but the surgeons are less sanguine.”

With a troubled countenance, the Empress opened the letter and read it hastily. She looked from its contents to its bearer; and fixing her sweet but penetrating eyes anxiously on his face, said in a doubting voice, “you are young, very young, for the trust I am called upon to confide to you!” Still she looked on him, and still she spoke; evidently without consciousness, uttering the remarks her observing mind was passing upon his appearance. “A youth like you, must be too fond of pleasure, to be a secure confidant! Too accessible — to much in the power of circumstances. And at such a crisis too! But he tells me, I may trust you as his son!”

Again she looked full at him. Louis's whole soul was fixed on that look, and

aroused by its occasion. That the rigid Ignatius had given such testimony of him, at such a moment, did not more surprise, than determine him to perish, rather than dishonour it. He did not venture to speak, but the expression of his eloquent countenance was more than a thousand vows to Elizabeth.

She sighed deeply, and sitting down by a table, leaned her head upon her hand. Louis remained standing where she had left him, regarding her with respectful interest. At last she looked up, and waved her hand to him to approach her.

“ My heart is heavy,” said she, “ with the tidings you have brought me. For, should my counsellor in all this, be indeed taken from me, how incalculable are the difficulties into which I shall be plunged! Nothing but full and complete success in the end, can excuse me to my family and to the world, for the perils I incur in the progress.”

Louis was silent. — Elizabeth resumed.

“ You know to what I allude !”

“ I know nothing,” replied he, “ but what the *Sieur Ignatius* has told me ; and that is, a general intimation of his possessing Your Majesty’s confidence : and that jealousy of so high distinction, he suspects to be the cause of his present state.”

The Empress took two or three turns up and down the room. She was harassed, and undecided, and often turned, to look again and again upon the youthful secretary. She suddenly stopped.

“ Did *Ignatius* tell you, who I know you to be ?”

“ He did. — That I am the son of the *Baron de Ripperda*.”

As he made this simple reply, the pride he had in being the son of such a father, seemed to encircle his brow with the before veiled diadem of all his princely ancestors.

“ And where is your father ?” asked the Empress.

“ At Madrid. And I cannot doubt that at such a moment, he would be eager to hasten to the feet of the Empress Elizabeth ; the generous truster in his friend !”

The Empress shook her head — “ Alas ! Alas !” cried she ; and again she walked from Louis with a hurrying pace. For some time she continued murmuring to herself, in a voice so low that he could not distinguish what she said ; but at last drawing near him, she again threw herself into a chair, and spoke aloud. “ You call me the generous truster in his friend ! I will be that to his son too. There is an honesty in your countenance ; an enthusiasm in your manner, so unlike a courtier, that, I cannot but believe you trust-worthy ! and, when *he* says it,” added she, pressing the *Sieur's* letter in her hand ; “ it is conviction. — Hearken then to me.”

Louis drew near. — And the Empress, in a low but steady voice, imparted to him certain subjects of national dispute between the empires of Germany and of Spain; and personal rivalries between their respective sovereigns; which she and the Baron de Ripperda, through the secret agency of Ignatius, were labouring to reconcile. She intimated that her Imperial husband retained so much of his ancient enmity to Philip; and the Austrian ministers were so jealous of yielding advantage to the Spanish cabinet; she was obliged to move towards her end with the strictest caution. Besides, she had some collateral objects in view, which, if obtained, would not only establish a cordial friendship between the two countries; but so balance the power of the continent; that war, for this generation at least, could hardly find a plea for disturbing the tranquillity of Europe.

“Some of these plans,” added she, “are more than suspected by my enemies,

and the enemies of my children; and since they have engaged a certain wily English Duke in their interest, an hour does not pass over my head without dread of the whole scheme being blown into the air. Like an evil spirit, he can transport himself when and wherever he pleases; and while he is invisible, work a train of mischief that is felt through many nations. It was only yesterday that he returned from one of his secret flights; from Paris, I suspect——” She suddenly paused; and putting her hand to her head, appeared to muse for a few minutes.

Louis's blood chilled at this mention of an English Duke. From what Ignatius had said to him on the same subject, he was compelled to think that the Empress could mean no other than Wharton. And, how strange it was, that every person who had named that Duke to him with censure, had all concurred in giving him some epithet of duplicity.

Elizabeth looked up, with an abrupt demand of her auditor, whether he thought the assassination traceable to Duke Wharton? adding, that she did not know a source whence it was more likely to spring.

“Madam,” returned Louis, “I should as soon suspect it from my own hand.”

She gazed on him, astonished.

“Yes!” repeated he, in a determined voice; “though it is possible that Duke Wharton may be hostile to Your Majesty’s politics; and even be the personal enemy of the Sieur Ignatius; yet I know him too well, not to stake my head on his abhorrence of a crime like this.”

The Empress did not withdraw her penetrating eye from his face.

“I now remember,” said she, “that it was he who spread the report at the *Favorita*, that the Baron de Ripperda’s son was at Vienna. He met you on the Danube. But Ignatius assured me, you had never seen him since!”

“ I never have. — And I never will, while he is an object of suspicion to Your Majesty, and to my father’s friend. But I must again aver, as I would at the judgment-day, that Duke Wharton is incapable of assassination.”

“ He shall be the better for your vindication,” returned the Empress. And then entering into a detailed communication, of what her new confidant was to impart to Ignatius relative to the most open part of their scheme ; she gave him a letter, which she wrote, and sealed in his presence, to acquaint the Sieur with the recent progress of their more secret views. When she put it into the hand of Louis, she said with much emotion, “ the last courier from Madrid, wrought so favourably on the Emperor, that I was even now conversing with him in the highest spirits, when I was called to hear this danger of my noble coadjutor ! — Should I lose him at this moment, their daggers had better have reached me !

Louis de Montemar, guard his life, as you would your own. You know not the value of the charge."

Louis received her command to be in these apartments the next day, at the same hour, to give her tidings of the *Sieur*. She then presented her hand to him to kiss, in sign of her favour to himself. He touched it on his bent knee; and as she turned to withdraw, she told him a page should attend him to the guard-room; but he must take such cognizance of the passages, as henceforth to find his way in the palace alone. Again she proceeded to the door, and again she turned round, and said with agitated solemnity; "should any fatal change occur, come to me to-night. — We will discourse together for the last time; and all that I have said in this conference, you must regard as a dream — to be forgotten!"

Louis silently bowed his head, and Her Majesty passed on. So crowded were

his thoughts with the events of the last six hours, he hardly noted the time, though he did the situation of the ground, as the promised attendant brought him to the guard-chamber.—Martini sprang to meet him; and, a moment after, he had left the mansion of royal splendors and luxury, to seek the cloisters of world-forswearing men! All without, was darkness and assumed humiliation; but within, dwelt the rulers of kings, the universal dictators, the all-compelling Jesuits! Louis now entered, to visit one of the most extraordinary personages that ever came within their walls; one, to whom the vast machinery was all unfolded, by which these mighty workmen moved and controuled the world.

CHAP. IV.

THE information which Louis brought to the suffering Ignatius, did not fail to heal the worst wound his enemies had inflicted; suspicion, that their machinations had reached the mind of the Emperor. When the surgeons visited their patient in the evening, they gave a more favourable report on his symptoms with regard to fever, which was the threatening danger of the morning. The manner of his passing the night, they thought would be decisive for hope or fear, and Louis entreated permission to attend his couch until day.

The Sieur peremptorily put his negative on this proposal. But Louis was steady in not being denied watching by the side of Castanos in the anti-room.

Martini, with a surgeon and a priest, remained all night in the cell of Ignatius ; and that he slept most part of the time, Louis was satisfied ; as, with his strictest attention, he could hardly hear a movement within.

Castanos, and his anxious companion, kept true vigils. The act was the same, though the motives were as different as the two men. In one of the dreary pauses of the night, when the intensity of Louis's meditations, on the various objects which bore upon the event of the present hour, had wearied his unrested spirit ; he observed Castanos shake the exhausted embers from his pipe ; and desirous of asking some questions respecting the fate of his packet to Don Ferdinand, he thought he could not have a better opportunity, and while the old Spaniard was twisting out his tobacco, he addressed him in a low voice.

“ Senor Castanos,” said he, “ you were so kind as to deliver a packet from

me to Don Ferdinand d'Osorio, into the hands of my father?"

"No," returned he, "your father was not at Madrid."

"Then, what became of my packet?"

"It was sent with the dispatches, to where he ordered them."

"Then I may assure myself of its safety? — and that my father was well?"

Castanos had resumed his pipe, and made no answer. After the second volume of renewed smoke had wreathed away from his sullen features, Louis addressed him again.

"But of course you saw my father, before you left Spain? Under the present anxious circumstances, it would particularly cheer me to know that he is well."

Castanos drew in, and puffed forth another cloud; then indolently sliding his words out of the unoccupied corner of his mouth, he sulkily replied, "Senor, the less, in the present circumstances, you

talk of your father ; the better for the object of your anxiety, and for yourself! — Walls have ears.”

With this apothegm, he resumed his smoking with redoubled energy, and Louis submitted to the silence imposed.

A few hours more, and the dawn brought a more communicative comforter from the inner chamber. Martini issued forth with smiling lips, to announce that his master's symptoms were those to please the doctors, for that he had just awoke with little remaining fever. The priest and surgeon soon after appeared, bearing the same testimony ; and the latter communicated the Sieur's commands, for the Chevalier de Phaffenberg to attend him immediately.

Though Louis shrunk from answering to the name, yet he hastened to obey. Again Ignatius took his hand, but it was no longer with the icy tremor of expiring life, nor the burning clasp of raging fever ; there was languor, but not death,

in the pressure; and with heart-felt joy Louis congratulated him on the certain hope of his recovery.

“ It is well,” replied the Sieur, “ and we shall not be ungrateful for it, where thanksgiving is due. But we must now proceed to business. They tell me, my wounds are too deep, to give prospect of my quitting this couch for many days. Our affairs will not brook that time. Your duty at the Chateau, and mine at the palace, must continue to be discharged, and you must perform them both.”

Louis's assent was as prompt as the delight with which he embraced active service. And if the idea of the bright form he had seen only for an instant, did flash across his mind with a hope of beholding it again; the passing thought was too transient to materially alloy the pure zeal with which he pressed forward to his new duty.

The Sieur then told him to return to

the Chateau for certain of the completed papers, and to bring them without delay, for his further orders. As the carriage was now directed to be always in readiness for the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, Louis found no tardiness in transporting himself back to the Chateau, and thence to the College again.

On his return, he found the surgeons in the invalid chamber, remonstrating with their patient against seeing his secretary again for that day. But Ignatius was inflexible, and to prevent increasing the evil by further opposition, they withdrew. Louis obeyed the beckon of his governor to the side of his bed, and there he received his instructions respecting the papers he had brought. He disposed them into several packets, and putting them into as many small leather-bags, sealed them, and addressed them according to his orders.

At a particular hour, he was conducted by Martini to a dungeon-like cell, in a

distant and obscure quarter of the College, where the Italian introduced him to a grey-headed brother of the order, who had been entrusted by Ignatius with this part of the business. His office was to receive, and to bring in succession, the messengers of the correspondence which Louis held in his hand. The venerable Jesuit told him, that several were then in waiting, but in separate cells; for no one was to know of the other, and each were conducted out by different passages.

Louis remained three hours in his gloomy hall of audience, before he had seen every body he ought to see, and had delivered to them all the packets of which they were to be the bearers to some of the most distant nations in Europe. He gave no further account of the Sieur's absence, to these foreigners, than that he was suddenly indisposed. An idea of his danger might have

had ruinous effects on the purposes of this various correspondence.

As the time drew near for his attendance on the Empress, Louis returned to Ignatius, to receive his further commands. This interview was brief, but pregnant with matter; and included instructions for a conversation with another personage, to whom the Imperial Elizabeth would see the necessity of introducing their young negociator.

Louis had now no reason to complain of want of trust, in those who commanded his services. The Empress was so impatient to hear his report, that he found her awaiting him; and his communications were so satisfactory, that she at once dismissed her worst fears for the *Sieur*, and entered into a circumstantial discussion of his message, comparing its expectations with what had passed between the Emperor and herself on the last overtures brought by Castanos.

She was not the direct agent to her husband in these affairs ; for His Majesty had not the most distant suspicion of her interference with any of the ostensible negociators ; therefore, all that she appeared to do, was by apparently accidental remarks ; but they were so managed, as very often to decide a fluctuating question. He had never admitted the *Sieur Ignatius* to a personal audience ; who, he however, respected as a Jesuit of talents, employed by the Spanish sovereigns to compromise secretly with *Sinzendorff*, the Imperial chancellor. The Emperor usually talked with the Empress on all that passed between him and *Sinzendorff* : and she made ample use of her influence in suggestion, and persuasion towards the leading objects of the Spanish propositions. Besides the brilliancy of her ostensible motive, to see her husband be the second *Cæsar* to close the *gates of Janus* on mankind ! she had two private views, in gratifying

the demands of Spain: to obtain the guarantee of so leading a power to the *pragmatic sanction*, which would establish her own descendants, male or female, on the throne of Germany; and to complete the cession of Philip from the cause of James Stuart, by which her near kinsman, George of Brunswick, would be more firmly seated on that of Great Britain.

An active enemy to the first of these projects was then residing at Vienna, in the person of the widowed Electress of Bavaria. Being the daughter of the late Emperor Joseph, (who died without a son,) she believed, if the female line were to inherit, that she and her posterity had every way more right to the succession than any daughter of the present Emperor, who was the younger brother of his predecessor, her father. To avert these claims, the present Emperor, Charles the Sixth, devised the act of settlement, (called the *pragmatic*

sanction,) on his own female posterity, in default of male issue; and to this, he was moving every wile of policy, to obtain the guarantee of the great European states. Fonder of artifice, than of plain dealing, Charles made promises he never intended to perform; though he hoped by their means to purchase the acquiescence of his brother monarchs. Spain had been once attempted in this way; but Philip's resentments against his former rival were not to be appeased. He joined France in thwarting all the Emperor's plans. And as he not only withheld his assent to the proposed act for the Austrian succession, but was actively hostile to that of the new King of England, the Empress concluded that he had extended his animosity to her, and was altogether jealous of the further aggrandizement of the House of Brunswick. But when the Baron de Ripperda, (whose brilliant wit, and diplomatic magnificence at her father's court, had been the first

object of her youthful admiration,) when he quitted Holland for Spain, and gained the confidential ear of its king; then the Spanish cabinet seemed to turn a colder aspect towards the setting star of the Stuarts; and the hopes of the Empress settled on the newly-rising minister of Spain.

The same policy which united the friends of the pragmatic sanction with those of the reigning king of England, brought the supporters of the Bavarian pretensions into joint interest with all the adversaries of the house of Brunswick, and consequently into strict friendship with the intended restorers of the line of James. To keep the negociation between the sovereigns of Spain and the Empress, from the cognizance of these two latter parties, now so determinately united, was indispensable to its ultimate success; for the Emperor was too jealous of a prince, who had once gained over him a great advantage; and too personally attached

to ancient Austrian prejudices, not to be very accessible to the diplomatic subtilities of the adverse faction, should they have timely notice to make the attack.

The Empress expressed herself to this effect; but there were still some secret measures between herself and Ignatius, which she did not think expedient to notice to their young confidant; and when she had explained all that she deemed necessary for the present, she told him he must go to the apartments of Count Sinzendorff, where that minister was now expecting him. She drew from her finger a ring that the Count knew, and which, on being presented by Louis, would be sufficient assurance that he was visited by the right person.

“But recollect,” said she, “the chancellor is ignorant that you are of more consequence than the mere secretary of the Sieur Ignatius. I told him your name is Phaffenberg; and take care you

do not give him, or any one else, reason to suspect you have any other."

Louis bowed; and her air of cautionary command, dilating into a smile, she added, "to-morrow, and every day, attend me here at the same hour, until perfect recovery restore your guardian to the full performance of his own duty."

The Empress's description of the situation of the chancellor's apartments in the palace, was too accurate for her ambassador to mistake his way; and, without impediment he found himself ushered into the presence of Count Sinzendorff. He recognized the ring, which the young secretary respectfully put into his hand, and without preface or circumlocution, entered at once upon the assassination of Ignatius, and the consequences to be drawn from the attempt. To detect the perpetrators was impossible, as the necessity for concealment in all that related to the negociation of the Sīeur, extended to

his person ; and to make a stir in search of the ruffians, would only direct the eyes of their employers, where to dare a second attack.

The chancellor then opened the communications he wished to be conveyed to Ignatius. They principally consisted of certain demands, besides that for the pragmatic sanction, which His Imperial Majesty persisted in making on the King of Spain, before he would propound to his ministers, what he styled, the very high requisitions from the Spanish side. The chancellor followed this up, with remarks on his own difficulty in preparing the minds of some of the most stubborn of these ministers, whom he could hardly bring to apprehend even the possibility of such measures being ever proposed to them.

From the plain and well-digested discourse of Count Sinzendorff, Louis derived a clear idea of the scheme in negotiation ; which, if brought fully into ef-

fect, did indeed promise universal benefit. In the constrained confidence of the *Sieur*, there was always so much mystery ; and in the hurried communications of the *Empress*, so much confusion ; that, until now, he could only see as afar off, a mass of anticipated events whose misty obscurity rendered some monstrous and most indistinct. But now he comprehended, not only the magnificence of the mutual greatness of *Austria* and of *Spain* ; but the foundations of prosperity and peace for *Europe*, so long threatened with the interminable miseries of hereditary wars. His soul, devoted to noble contemplations, was roused to all its wonted ardour by these views ; and, vibrating to the tone of his father's declared motive, which the chancellor had incidentally quoted ; he made some remarks on the proposed measures, that did not less astonish than please that consummate statesman.

Count *Sinzendorff* saw that it was no hireling secretary *Ignatius* had dis-

patched to him. The air and language of Louis were too elevated to belong to a man born in dependance; and the chancellor read in the intelligence of his eye, and the peculiar attention of his countenance, as he respectfully listened to what was said, that he was still unapprenticed to the mechanism of politics. He felt the soul of patriotism, but he was not yet aware of the machinery, which, in this world of artifice must be its body! A few general sentiments of political virtue, uttered by the Count, elicited its purest principles from the lips of Louis. His own glowing words had given the tone he thought he had taken from the chancellor, who, in fact, only admired the enthusiasm he reflected, and pitied what he admired. "It is a *first love*, amiable youth!" thought he, "which must give place to a more worldly bride!"

That this singularly noble young man, both in appearance and manner, should have been introduced to him by the Em-

press and the Jesuit Ignatius, as a common secretary, and by the name of Phaffenberg ; (a family, whose folly and extravagance had long ago sent it into obscurity!) did not so surprise Sinzendorff, as it confirmed his suspicion, that he saw the son of some great man in this interesting novice ; and his shrewd guesses did not lead him far from the mark. He smiled inwardly, at the useless deception which the Empress thought to put upon his penetration ; and determined to allow her to believe he was as blind as she wished. Before he and the object of his doubts separated, it was fixed, that every night, at an hour before midnight, the latter should attend in the Chancellor's apartments, to be the medium of communication between him, Ignatius, and the Empress.

When Louis returned from his long and double embassy, all he had to impart was listened to without interruption. For when he began his recital, the Sieur

apprised him, that in transactions of this nature, it was so necessary to recapitulate every word that passed; and as nearly as possible, describe the manner of saying it, that he would not confuse his recollection by a single interrupting remark. When Louis finished speaking, all his guardian said, was — “It is well.” and then bade him return to the Chateau for the remainder of the night.

He had a task to perform there before he slept; and similar ones would henceforth lengthen his visits to a late hour every evening, as long as his double duty lasted. He was to register all that was said in his presence, by the Empress and the Chancellor. And he was to make duplicates of this diary, into the cypher he had been so long accustomed to copy; and to understand which, the Sieur now gave him a key. Every night he was to return to the Chateau, and every morning make his appearance at the College.

The two following days passed in the

same round of duties ; but there was a difference in the third, which made it remarkable to Louis, and gave a new character to those which succeeded it. He again beheld the beautiful friend of Elizabeth.

Not having seen her since her first transit across his then cheerless sky, the starry brightness of that glance only occurred to him afterwards, like the fading image of a delightful dream. Absorbed in the great interests which now occupied him, he was thinking of nothing less than her, when, on entering the *boudoir* to await the Empress, he was surprised to see her accustomed chair filled by another lady ; and a lovely girl sitting by her, busily employed on the table. He started, and the lady, hastily throwing back a lace veil, which shaded her face as she bent over her companion, discovered to him the beautiful creature he hardly expected to see again. She apologized for having permitted her own, and the Arch-Duchess's occupations, to make her for-

get the hour in which these rooms ought to be left to his use ; and, taking the Princess's arm, had even passed into the next chamber, before he could recollect himself so much as to feel that he stood like an idiot, without having uttered a word of the commonest civility, in answer to her graceful address. He then flew after her ; and spoke, he knew not what, in explanation of his remissness ; all the while walking by her side in a strange disorder of feelings, till reaching a small door in almost the farthest apartment, she turned round, and with a dignified bend of her neck and a dimpled smile, granted him her pardon, and disappeared with her fair charge.

Louis paused a moment, looking at the closed door through which she had passed ; and then returned to the *boudoir*, with his senses all in a maze. His heart, which had never beat before at the sight of womankind, throbbed in his breast almost audibly. Such an eye, as its soft

lustre fell upon him, he had never met before ; he felt its rays in his heart. And then, so finely composed a figure ! Such matchless grace in her shape and snowy arms, as she led the young princess along. And the golden tresses which mingled with the white veil upon her neck, made him think of the peerless Helen, whose divine beauties compelled the admiration of the very empire she destroyed.

Full of these imaginations, the more he thought, the farther did his mind wander from the business which brought him there :—and, when the Empress did make her appearance, it was with difficulty that he recalled his senses to the subject of the interview. In one of her pauses, she noticed his abstraction. She remarked it to him. A bright crimson flashed over his face. She repeated her enquiries. Louis was astonished at his own emotion ; but without seeking other excuse, though with deepening colour,

he said, he feared he had behaved rudely to a lady who had just left that apartment: but he was surprised, at meeting any but Her Majesty; and he had not yet recovered from his confusion.

Elizabeth bade him describe the lady. To do that, he felt was impossible; though, on the demand, his ready heart repeated its pulsations; and looking down, he merely answered, "she was with the Arch-duchess." The Empress smiled. She now knew whom he had seen; and by his disorder, had no difficulty in guessing the cause of his abstraction.

"The lady," returned she, "is the Countess Alheim; to whose care these apartments are consigned, as my first *lady of the key*. She is also the governess of my eldest daughter, whom you saw; and whom I wish her to model after her own graces!"

Louis unconsciously sighed, as he bowed to this information; and Elizabeth, thinking she understood his meaning, with a smile still more gracious than the

former, added — “ she is a widow, though so young : — and has hitherto loved me too well, to be persuaded from my service by any one of the numerous solicitors for her hand.”

Louis felt another impertinent sigh rising to his lips, but he smothered it with a gentle effort; saying inwardly — “ What is all this to me ! ” and made no answer to the Empress, but a second bow. She immediately passed to the subject of his audience.

In returning to the College, he would not suffer himself to dwell a moment on the image of the beautiful Countess. But he was not permitted to keep his wise resolve of dismissing it altogether from his thoughts ; for the bright original found occasions of repeating the impression day after day.

She sometimes awaited him with preparatory messages from the Empress. At other times he surprised her and the young Princess at their studies. But at

none of these meetings could she be prevailed on to linger a moment. When she had to deliver a message, she hastened away as soon as it was uttered. And when he broke on her accidentally, the instant he had caught a glimpse of her white arms moving over the lute, or had heard the trill of her exquisite voice warbling through the rooms, she would rise in disorder, and hurry from his ardent entreaties in so sweet a confusion, that it was sure to fix her idea in his mind till their next rencounter.

Louis felt the truth of the observation, that "The secret to interest, is to excite curiosity, and never satisfy it." He was ever asking himself, why the charming Countess, the worshipped of so many hearts, should be so timid to him? Or rather, why she should thus fly, as if with aversion, one whose heart was so well prepared to admire the graces of a mind, which, the Empress had assured him were equal to those of her match-

less person. He had never seen any thing so beautiful as that person! And in so fair a temple, he could not doubt, as fair a spirit must dwell. He longed to converse with it; to understand all its loveliness; and to feel his heart sympathise, as it was wont to do in holy Lindisfarne, with all the pure intelligence of woman's mind. It was not of love he thought; for though he respected the sentiment, hitherto he had never felt its touch; and, as he had devoted his admiration to all that would take him out of himself, he had always regarded the winning of a female heart, as but a secondary object in the aims of his life. "Ah, never," has he often said, "would I give my *noon of manhood to a myrtle shade!* Woman's love was given to be the help-mate of man, but his folly makes her the tyrant!" In this case, as in others, Louis was yet to learn. — How wise is speculation, how absurd is practice!

CHAP. V.

THE Countess was indeed accomplished; and most accomplished in the art of charming. The noble Cornelia, and the tender Alice, knew nothing of her science; and of what spirit it was, the heart of their cousin had yet to prove.

On the day of his first appearance at the palace, she had only to behold his singularly fine person, to think him the handsomest young man who had ever entered there. But the fair Altheim was not particularly attracted by the charms which most pleased in herself; and she would never have sought a second glance of the graceful secretary, had she not accidentally attended to a discourse between her imperial mistress and the chancellor, wherein the latter,

(being piqued by a quotation from Ripperda, which the Empress made, to confute one of his political arguments;) rather sarcastically gave hints that he suspected the wounded Jesuit had got something more illustrious in his diplomatic novice, than he chose to acknowledge. Elizabeth affected to see nothing peculiarly distinguishing in the manners of the secretary; but when the chancellor had withdrawn, she let some ambiguous expressions escape her, in the triumph of having baffled his penetration. These intimations were not lost on the Countess. And on the day following that in which she and the Arch-Duchess had retreated from Louis in such haste, the Empress could not forbear telling her in what an amazement of admiration she had surprised him; adding, “He is a conquest worth *more* than a haughty beauty’s *smile!*”

Elizabeth smiled as she said this, but remarked no further. It was enough

for her fair confidant; who, if her soul possessed any passion, did not scruple to own it was ambition. To gratify this, she had given her blooming beauties, at the age of seventeen, to the superannuated Count Alheim; a man of high family and great riches, but who had long survived every faculty, but that of dotage on any pretty face that would endure the incense of an habitual idolater of youth and beauty. At that early age, she had been sent for by the Empress, who loved her, from her having been the only daughter of the respectable woman who had been her nurse; and in consequence of which the pretty Otteline had been brought up as the favourite play-thing of the Princess; but the gracious Elizabeth soon regarded her with the tenderness of a sister; and on the death of the venerable mother, embraced the opportunity to have the companion of her youth brought to Vienna. Otteline de Blaggay was many years

younger than her Imperial mistress, and far transcended that beautiful Princess in every personal grace. But as the prejudice in favour of high birth is so great in Austria, that a mis-alliance is considered as indelible a disgrace, as a moral dishonour; none of all the illustrious courtiers who contemplated, and sighed for the possession of the lovely Otteline, ever thought of making her the sharer of his rank. A thousand gay adventurers pressed forward, to gratify their passion for beauty, and to excite an interest in their behalf with the Empress, by making her favourite their wife. But Otteline knew herself to be despised, though worshipped. And as rank was all she wanted, to set her in every respect above the women who envied her charms, and therefore looked with double contempt on her untitled name, she resolved to marry for rank, and for nothing else. Within a few months after her arrival, the old Count Altheim be-

came infatuated with her beauty; and, intoxicated by her smiles, dared every obloquy to raise her to the station her lofty spirit seemed so calculated to dignify. The Empress felt the situation of her favourite, and, having joyfully pronounced her consent; the no less delighted Otteline gave her hand to the Count in a splendid espousal, at which, not merely her patroness, but all the Imperial family were present.

While the fond husband lived, his young Countess was the brightest, the loveliest, the proudest of the court. Elizabeth exulted in the homage the haughty Austrians were at length obliged to pay her *élève* and country-woman; and to render it more complete, she determined that an application to the Countess should be the only avenue to her Imperial favours. But the Count died; and according to the law at Vienna, that on the death of her husband, the wife loses whatever rank she

may have acquired by her marriage; the Countess Alheim, though a richly endowed widow, found herself at once thrown back into all her former insignificance. This reverse was doubly galling, since she had been on the heights of consideration; and had trod that elevated path with a step not much less imperial than that of the Empress herself. To be contemned now, was mortification almost to madness. But the beautiful mourner had lived too long in courts, to permit her rivals to perceive the complete victory events had given them over her. Affecting a wish for retirement after the death of so adoring a husband, she lived secluded for a time; loftily leaving that world, she was aware, would have scornfully excluded her: and when the assumption of inconsolable grief was no longer feasible, Elizabeth appointed her to the high office of presiding governess over the Arch-Duchess Maria-Theresa. This afforded her a dignified

plea for still abstaining from the assemblies of the court; though in private parties she sometimes permitted herself to be seen. Yet this was a rare indulgence; — that the novelty of her unequalled charms, whenever she did appear, might continue to give her successive triumphs over the envy of her proud rivals; — and the effect was ever what she expected. She was then twenty-six, and though in the meridian of her beauty, she foresaw that the time approached when she must resign this, her sole sceptre of power, to some younger hand. What then should she be? She could not endure to dwell upon the answer; and again turned her views to some elevating alliance. To think of another Austrian connection, would have been waste of time, and a hopeless speculation. She must direct her attention to some of the numerous noblemen from foreign countries, who visited Vienna.

This plan was hardly determined on, before the arrival of the Marquis Santa Cruz gave the wished-for victim to her ambition in the person of his son Don Ferdinand d'Osorio. — Young, handsome, susceptible, and of high rank! It was an opportunity not to be neglected; and a few interviews with him at the *petits soupés* of the Baroness Hermanstadt, put to flight every remembrance of the dove-eyed beauties he had so lately sighed for in the groves of Italy. Lost in the blaze of her attractions, he soon lived only in her presence; and drew from her a confession, that she awaited his father's consent alone to become his bride. But she was a Protestant, and she was of ignoble birth; two disqualifications, which the Marquis's bigotry of faith and of ancestry could not be brought to excuse. In anguish and hope, Ferdinand flew to the feet of his adored Otteline, and implored her to give him her hand, in spite of his inexorable father. — She knew the de-

grading consequence of such a compliance. She saw the point to which the passions of Ferdinand were hurrying his reason ; and to throw it at once on that dreadful extremity ; and by that phrenzy of despair alarm the Marquis, and compel him to save the senses of his son, by consenting to the marriage ; to do this, she exasperated the agonies of her lover's mind, by appearing to regard the proposal for a clandestine union, as an insult from himself. When she allowed herself to be convinced of the contrary, still her indignation continued, though directed to a different object ; and she declared, that her wounded honour could never be appeased, nor would she consent to see Don Ferdinand again, till he should bring her the Marquis's only adequate apology for the disgrace he had presumed to attach to her alliance.

Ferdinand departed from her, almost insane ; and in that condition threw himself upon the mercy of his father. But

the good Catholic, and Spanish Grandee, was not to be moved. And the frantic lover, being denied admittance at the door of his proud mistress, he flew to unburthen his distracted soul to their mutual friend, the Baroness Hermanstadt.

The narrative that follows is of more common, than agreeable detail. The Baroness was one of those women who are a blot on their own sex, and a blight to all of the other on whom they fix their rapacious eyes. Abandoned to ostentatious expence, no means were rejected, by which she could gratify the vanity her own fortune could not supply; and while her friend looked abroad for an ennobling alliance, to give her rank, she laid snares for dishonourable engagements, to furnish her with gold. Her iniquitous proceedings had hitherto been so warily managed between herself and her dupes, that no one else suspected her of error. — She was

generally received in the first circles of Vienna, and hence had a wider field from which to select her victims. The thoughtless expenditure of the son of Santa Cruz, had for some time tempted her rapacity; and the opportunity presented itself of making it all her own. She was an elegant woman, and an animated companion; and soon made the distracted Ferdinand forget the pretended disdain of managing ambition, in the delusions of practised art and soothing flattery. Intoxicated with what he believed her generous oblivion of herself, in voluntarily sacrificing every duty to her newly-avowed passion for him; he was only awakened from his trance of vice, by the information that her husband, a rough Hungarian General, was returning from his post on the Turkish frontiers. She would gladly have exchanged this poor and rugged hero, for the soft prodigal, she had bereft of his better reason; and she made the proposal to him: — To fly

with him, before the Baron could arrive ; and that henceforth their fates should be one. As she clung round him, making the insidious proffer, a gleam from his long banished reason seemed to visit him from on high ; he shrunk with horror from an everlasting engagement with such a woman. Though the slave of her allurements, she was not the mistress of his soul, and he dared to deny her. Then all her assumed persuasiveness was cast aside. She insisted on flight, with a vehemence that turned her passionate love to threatening fury ; and closed with holding a pistol to her head, to extort his assent, or to end her existence. He wrested the weapon from her hand ; and oppressed with his own bitter consciousness, left her in a storm of frantic upbraidings, to the care of her confidential maid.

From this disgraceful connection, it was, that the Marquis Santa Cruz had borne away his son.

As soon as the extraordinary disorder of Ferdinand, and consequent enquiries, had made the Marquis aware of these circumstances, he saw the necessity of hurrying him away from the machinations of a wicked woman, too well practised in the ruin of the youthful mind; and too ready to make the credulous Ferdinand a lasting prey.

Meanwhile, the disappointed Countess Alheim, foiled by her perfidious friend and versatile lover, broke with the one, and really disdained the other. And though she never condescended to enquire about either, after the double desertion was known to her beyond a doubt; yet she was not insensible to some feeling of gratified revenge, when she heard that Ferdinand had abandoned her rival, and left the country.

The Marquis hastened with his remorseful son, to Holland and to England. But the pangs of his repentance had not struck at the root of his crime.

He mourned the act of guilt, not the empassioned nature which impelled it. He cursed the hour in which he had ever met with the Baroness Hermanstadt ; but he did not condemn the headlong impetuosity with which he yielded to every impulse of self-gratification. The only son of his parents, and heir to immense revenues in both hemispheres, he had been indulged in every wish, till he believed he had no duty in life but to enjoy all its blameless pleasures. But when personal gratification is the principle of existence, the boundary between innocence and transgression is often invisible. Ferdinand had more than once trembled on it. He had now overleaped it. — And though racked with self-aborrence at what he had done ; and hoping, by deeds of penance to repass it ; yet he fostered in his heart the passions which had betrayed him : and even found a new temptation for their excesses, in the land of his penitential pilgrimage. By a strange coin

vidence of fate, while he was sowing tares in the happy fields of Lindisfarne, Countess Alheim was preparing a similar attempt on the peace of its darling Louis.

The beautiful Otteline was as widely different from the character of her false friend, as unsunned snow from the molten lava of Vesuvius. She sought for nothing in her union with Ferdinand, but the rank he would bestow on her. His riches and his love were alike indifferent to her. And when she turned her eyes on the handsome secretary of Ignatius, she had no other idea in her meditated attack on his heart, but what aimed at sharing a birthright, which the Empress had assured her, would exceed her proudest wishes. Notwithstanding her incapability of loving, and indeed of feeling any emotion but those connected with her ambition and its disappointments; she was so keen an observer, and so fine an actress, that he must have had an *Ithuriel* eye, who could

have distinguished the counterfeit from the real, in her pretensions.

Having made her first advances on Louis, by a retreating manœuvre, she perceived that her personal charms had made their intended impression; and that she had only to produce the graces of her conversation, to complete the conquest. On subjects of general taste, she was mistress; and in every department of human knowledge that belongs to worldly wisdom, she was perfectly informed. If sympathy did not give her anticipation of her lover's thoughts, self-interest endowed her with tact to glide into his opinions; and she did this so adroitly, as to make her echo appear the leading voice:— Her accomplishments were likewise brought into play; and the Empress did not disdain to partake the management. Once or twice, she detained the Arch-dutchess and her governess in the room, to call forth some natural or acquired charm in the beauti-

ful instructress; and when the blushing Countess withdrew, Her Majesty usually made some observation on the inimitable perfections of her character, and the engaging modesty by which they were so constantly veiled.

In one of these interviews, when Louis was gazing with his soul in his eyes after the departing steps of the too exquisite Otteline, the Empress, with a peculiar smile, ejaculated, — “ She has lately become enamoured of politics. — And should she negociate for herself, adieu my right in her possession !”

Louis felt himself turn pale, but he did not reply. — Though his Imperial Inquisitor thought his looks were sufficiently expressive, she was determined to carry away a direct avowal; and with a little archness, she added, “ But you, perhaps, doubt her powers ?”

He coloured as he replied: “ I believe the Countess Altheim may command just what she pleases.”

“ Indeed !” cried the Empress, “ then you must not be my minister. If she negociate against me, I see where my interest would be.”

Elizabeth smiled again, and with an expression that Louis could not resolve into any positive meaning ; — but it was unpleasant to him, and gave him an impression of being played upon. A confused recollection of the *Sieur's* exordium against the power of beauty, suddenly occurred to him ; and with rather a more offended air than is often ventured to an Empress, he said ; “ believing that the Countess Alheim would always please to command what is right, I did not suppose her influence could ever be actuated against the interests of Your Majesty.”

The soft colour on Elizabeth's cheek, mounted to a proud crimson. The words were compliment, but the manner reproof. She regarded the audacious speaker with a look of astonishment. His eyes

were now directed to the ground. She felt she had been reprov'd; and by a youth! a boy! The son of a man, who, if her confidant and coadjutor, she was also his! and, from circumstances, so much more in her power, than she in his; that, at any moment she could ground his chariot in the quicksands; and give him a fall as deep, as that which had sunk for ever the fortunes of his predecessor, the great Alberoni! — And yet the son of this man, so perilously placed, so dependant on her will, durst presume to be offended with an innocent freedom she had condescended to take with his feelings! — He had dared to imply to her, that she had trifled with him beneath her dignity; and still he stood before her with a mien of more true respect, than any she was accustomed to meet from the most obsequious of her vassals!

With a haughty swelling at her heart, the Imperial Elizabeth ran through the first of these suggestions, but as she con-

templated the countenance of the speaker, so noble, so modest; she found a more ingenuous sentiment arise. She had then, for the first time in her life, beheld the unveiled face of simple truth! the situation was strange to her; but there was a charm even in the novelty: and again smiling, but with an air in which all the distance of her rank was conveyed, she graciously said, “there was something besides compliment in that speech of your’s, de Montemar; but I forgive you.” She stretched out her hand to him, in sign of full pardon; and as he respectfully touched it with his lip, she added, “you would make a better counsellor than a courtier; but if you mean to be a statesman, you must unite both.”

He bowed as she turned away; and said to himself, “then I must mean to be, what I never can be. If the world is not to be governed without the moral degradation of its governors, my am-

bition to be a ruler must follow Orlando's wits to the moon!"

Gracious as the Empress looked and spoke, he yet saw that he had been on the verge of giving her mortal offence. His Pastor-uncle had often told him, the atmosphere of courts was cold, in proportion to their elevation: it was as withering to every honest demonstration of the heart, as the icy peaks of the glaciers, to the verdure which would flourish in the vallies! Louis did not then quite believe the representation; but he now remembered the lesson, and sighed to find it true.

Musing on the causes and consequences of so unnatural a state of moral existence, he passed hastily through the galleries. The day was unusually warm for the season, and the heat of the stoves made the unventilated air so oppressive, that absorbed in thought, he unconsciously complied with his bodily feeling; and, with his cap still in his hand, he allowed

his pelisse to fall open from his figure, as he hastened down the passages. As he turned into an obscure lobby, by which he avoided the public guard-room, he passed the bottom of a flight of steps. Two persons were coming out of a door at the top. He did not observe the circumstance, so profound was his reverie, till he heard the voice of Wharton exclaiming, "'tis he, by Heaven!"

Without a moment's hesitation, Louis sprang forward; but not to meet his friend. He disappeared from the passage, at the very instant he heard the Duke throw himself over the rails of the stair, and call in louder accents, "De Montemar! De Montemar! Stop, for God's sake! It is Wharton who calls you!"

But Louis continued to fly, and Wharton to pursue, till the former abruptly turning through a small postern into the street, darted into his carriage; which always awaited him at this obscure en-

trance. It was just wheeling into the mob of attending equipages, when he beheld the Duke issue from the gate, and stand gazing around in search of his faithless friend!

“ Faithless, I am not, dear, insulted Wharton !” cried Louis, aloud, though unheard by him he apostrophised. “ But you have seen me desert you ! Fly you, in spite of the sacred adjuration with which you would have recalled me ! Oh, what do you now think of ungrateful de Montemar ?”

At that moment he saw the Duke strike his forehead, as in the vexation of disappointment ; and in the next, the turn of the carriage snatched him from his sight.

Louis now began to arraign his own carelessness, in having erred so unpardonably against warning, as to permit any abstraction of mind to divert him from the indispensable concealment of his person. Angry with himself, and vexed to

the soul that his negligent reverie had so immediately incurred the evil most deprecated by Ignatius, the wormwood in his heart for a moment distilled over every other object, and with a bitterness unusual to him, he exclaimed, "Why did I forget that a man sworn to politics, has immolated body and mind? Neither love nor friendship, nor the reasoning faculty, are for him. She is his deity, and must command all his thoughts! Had I properly recollected this detested creed, coiled like Satan in his serpent-train, I might have passed through the dust, unnoticed by the erect eyes of Duke Wharton!"

Perhaps, the consciousness that his own nature had caught some of this abhorrent system of disguise, excited temper, as well as regret, in this moody exclamation! His soul was naturally brave and frank; but the mysterious language of the Sieur had touched him with a kind of superstitious dread on certain

points ; and he now shrunk from mentioning this rencontre to any one. He knew it would fill Ignatius with alarm for their secret ; and in the present state of his slowly-closing wounds, all agitation was dangerous. To name it to the Empress, might not only re-awaken her suspicions of the Duke, but excite her to precautions hostile to his safety. Louis thought, and re-thought over these circumstances ; and, as his perturbed feelings subsided, and gave him clearer judgment, he fully determined on silence. He flattered himself that no ill could proceed from this concealment ; and while he resolved to be more circumspect in future, he believed that Wharton was incapable of any act which could implicate his friend, and might be justly feared. He did not hope that the Duke could suppose that either now, or on the Danube, he had mistaken any other person for him. He might have been persuaded to say the mistake was probable ; but

Louis could not believe the possibility of his having ever thought so. For, could any one make him think he had not seen Wharton on the Danube; that he had not heard his voice calling on him through the passages of the palace?

“ Oh, no,” cried he, “ there is an identity which never can deceive the heart! You know that it was Louis de Montemar you saw, that it was Louis de Montemar who fled you! But a day will come, I trust, when you may know all; or at least, when you shall see cause to grant to me, that I could not do otherwise: and that one essential in true friendship, is sometimes to confide, even against the evidence of our own senses.”

With that romantic faith, Louis had confided in the purity of Wharton's attachment; and he believed that Wharton would not be less generous to him. But Louis was enthusiastic, and judged men with that deference to oral wisdom, which hangs on the precept of virtue, as if it

were virtue's self. He was yet practically ignorant, that a man's taste for moral excellence might be as exquisite as that which modelled the life of Addison ; and his conduct be as foreign from his theory, as that which debased the genius of Richard Savage. Hence, Louis formed his opinion of his fellow-creatures, rather from the sentiments he heard them utter, than from the actions he was told they performed. He could not be mistaken in the one ; misrepresentation, or misapprehension of motives, might pervert the other ; and thus he more often made a good sentiment the commentary on a dubious action, than tried the principles of the sentimentalist, by the rectitude of his conduct. Indeed, he was not thus liberal, merely from never having supposed the absurdity of men admiring a principle they are determined never to adopt ; but from an ingenuous pleader in his own breast, whose still small voice continually whispered to him, " Why

should I conceive the worst of others, when my own conduct so often falls short of my best intentions! nay, frequently turns so blindly aside, that I wonder to find myself in the midst of errors, when I most intended to do the perfect right! But the heart's weakness, the impatience of the will, the frowardness of the temper! how can I feel these within me, and not judge with charity of appearances in others?"

"And you, dear Wharton," cried he, "are now called on to judge me charitably. To believe any thing of me, but that I could treat you thus, from the dictates of my own will."

How Wharton did judge of the conduct of Louis de Montemar, after events were to prove. Louis was right in believing him sure of his friend's identity, both on the Danube and in the palace gallery. But in the first instance, as he saw him no more, he supposed that some cause must have hurried him from Vienna; and he

did not think it worth while to press the matter on those who denied it. But now, that he had not only seen him again, but seen him fly his sight and his voice! Here indeed, Wharton could hardly credit his senses. And he was still standing in the porch, gazing after the various passing carriages, when the companion he had broken from in his pursuit, rejoined him.

He enquired of the Duke, who the person could be, he was so eager to overtake; and remarking on the oddity of so determined an avoidance, exclaimed, "He must have been gone in an instant; for though I heard your exclamation, I never saw to whom it was made."

"Then I have probably been racing after a ghost," replied Wharton, stifling his chagrin under a gay laugh; "but if it have aught of mother-earth about its airy sides, I will grapple with it yet."

His companion replied in the same strain, observing, that had it not been for

the over-topping figure of the Duke, he might have had a glimpse of the nimble-footed apparition. But soon observing that the curved brow of Wharton did not well agree with the merriment on his lip, the gentleman looked more serious, and again asked the name of the fugitive. Perceiving that his companion had not attended to the words of his exclamation, whatever he had done to its sound, the Duke carelessly answered, "It matters not; he is only a scape-goat, with more sins on his foolish head than he thinks of!"

"But his flight vexes you?"

"Because he is so good as to bear away my sins on his pate, and I am not in a humour to be tired of their company."

"He is your confessor then, and was flying from his duty?"

"You have it," returned the Duke, in a low whisper; "and for my conscience's sake, without further comment, let us allow him to go to the devil!"

The gentleman shook his head incredulously; but added, laughing, "I am too good a catholic to pry into mysteries, sacred or profane." And Wharton, seeing he suspected some affair of gallantry, with a glance to corroborate the idea, laughed also, and passed to another subject.

CHAP. VI.

WHETHER Duke Wharton disdained to mention again the name of the friend who had unquestionably fled him, or how it happened that no notice transpired of this second rencontre, Louis could not determine; but as several days passed without receiving any intimation of it at the palace, he hoped it was buried in the mind of the Duke; and that only between themselves it would hereafter be mentioned.

The *Sieur* was still a prisoner in his cell. The more eager he became to resume his diplomatic duties, the more his recovery was retarded. Twice in the course of a fortnight, the anxiety of his mind had inflamed his wounds to jeopardy. Louis said every thing that

cheering anticipations could devise, to assuage this impatience. But his own perseverance in his double, nay treble duty, at the college, the palace, and the chateau, did most to satisfy the Sieur, by proving that he had not employed an inefficient agent.

Couriers arrived, and were dispatched, with propositions and acquiescences, which every time brought the grand object nearer to a close ; and Louis's encreasing labours were rewarded every day by the sunny smiles of the bewitching Otteline. The Empress seemed to have forgotten what had passed between herself and the young secretary, respecting her ; and the favourite herself, as if unconscious of having been referred to, continued to him those ineffable attentions of eye and ear, which, without a word, are the most eloquent language of the soul. He saw her beautiful, had witnessed her accomplished ; from the Empress he heard of her endearing virtues ;

and under such impressions he hourly felt the influence of her magnetic looks, of the gently struggling sighs which were breathed near him, as she bent at his side, to perform any little task appointed by her smiling mistress.

He had conceived a high idea of the virtuous female character, from his sweet cousins, the companions of his youth; and loving them with a brother's pride, whenever the image of a more exclusive attachment would obtrude itself upon his fancy, it always arrayed itself in a form beauteous as theirs; and united all their endearing qualities in the visionary claimant on his heart. But amongst the daughters of peer or commoner, who added to the winter festivities of Morewick-hall, or welcomed bright summer on the rocks of Lindisfarne, no such miracle of a romantic brain ever presented itself. Many of them were fair, amiable, and engaging; but all were inferior in some indispensable grace, to the noble Cornelia

or gentle Alice : and when those charming sisters continued to rally him on his invulnerable heart, he would plead guilty to the charge ; declaring it was all divided between fraternal love for them, and, he trusted, some future friendship with a brother mind of his own sex.

The month he passed in the highlands of Scotland, made him believe that he had found this treasure in the accomplished Wharton. The Duke courted his confidence. And from one so full of every elevated sentiment, of every enchanting gaiety, of every demonstration of regard, could he withhold it ? No ; he loved him, as he was afterwards too well inclined to adore the resistless Otteline, with all his imagination, all the ardour of unrestrained enthusiasm.

His *beau ideal* of the female form was far surpassed by what he saw in his first interview with the Countess Alheim ; and the image of perfect beauty being once impressed on his senses, it was easy

to stamp belief on every shew of its intellectual loveliness. At first, he regarded her faultless lineaments, with little more than the same delighted taste with which he used to gaze on the admirable forms from Italy, which embellished the galleries of Bamborough. But when those eyes, so beautiful in themselves, were turned on him with a glance that conveyed her soul to his, then the ethereal fire seemed to have shot from heaven on the fair statue, and he felt its electricity in every vein.

One morning, after the Empress had retired from the saloon, Louis remained, by her orders, to make minutes of some particulars in their discussion. The Countess Alheim sat near him, awaiting the memorandum she was to convey to her mistress. He pursued his task with a diligence, neither his employer, nor her favourite desired; but he began to tremble on meeting the eyes which now so kindly beamed on him; and, in-

explicably, (as were the feelings with which he enjoyed and dreaded their powerful appeals to his sensibility,) he shrunk with alarm at the most distant whisper of his heart, that *now he loved!*

While he still sat, busily writing, with his eyes rivetted to the paper; and the fair Otteline's on him, with a look that was almost indignant at his perverse industry; the door opened, and a lady, in deep mourning, and half fainting, was supported into the room by an attendant of the same sex. The Countess was transfixed to her seat. But at sight of a woman in such a state, Louis forgot at once the *Imperial boudoir* and his own secret visits there, and hastened to her assistance. The Countess recovered her presence of mind in the same instant, and approached the invalid; but she had glanced her eyes on Louis as he drew near, and had already accepted the use of his arm. Between him and the other lady she was conducted to a sofa. In a voice of pro-

found respect, but with evident vexation, the Countess enquired how her Imperial Highness had been affected, and how those apartments were so fortunate as to be honoured by her presence? The attendant lady answered for her mistress, who still leaned her head on the shoulder of Louis, that she was returning from a visit to the Arch-duchess Maria Theresa, when becoming suddenly faint, she turned into the Altheim gallery, in hopes of meeting the Countess, and obtaining some *eau de Cologne*.

The anticipated restorative was immediately produced; and the Princess, having taken some, soon after re-opened her eyes; and relinquished her hold on her respectful supporter. Her lady-attendant and the Countess vied with each other in felicitations on her recovery; and while the latter was pressing the use of several pungent essences, Louis, who hoped his assistance had passed unnoticed, was gliding out of the room: but the still-

languid invalid caught a glimpse of his retreating figure, and abruptly interrupting the Countess, requested her to call her friend back, as she wished to thank him for his services.

Otteline obeyed; though he saw by her altered countenance, it was with reluctance; however, he turned to the soft summons of her voice, and approached the sofa with a modest bow. The Princess directed her large dark eyes upon the figure and face of Louis; both of which surprised her, as they were strange to the court, and yet possessed *un air distingué* too pre-eminent, she was sure, to belong to any man attending there in a dependant quality.

“Sir,” said she, “your politeness has been very useful to me; and I desire to know to whom I am obliged.”

He bowed, but it was in confusion.— He felt that his tongue would blister, in uttering the first falsehood, he had even implied, in his life. Supposing that this

disordered silence arose from a flattering awe of herself, Her Highness turned with a smile to the Countess, and demanded of her, the name of her friend.

“The Chevalier de Phaffenberg,” replied the favourite with a rising colour.

“Phaffenberg!” repeated the Princess, “I thought that noble family was extinct. — Of which of the brothers, Ernest or Rudolph, is he the son?”

Her eyes addressed the question to Louis; but his confusion encreased, and he did not look up to meet them. He even made a step towards the door; so incapable was he of supporting the representation of the Countess, by any direct deception from his own lips. She did not observe his changing complexion in vain; and bending to the illustrious questioner, whispered something in her ear. Her Highness more than smiled as she listened; she laughed, and nodded her head in sign that she

understood her ; then turning to Louis, again addressed him.

“ Chevalier, I will not detain you longer. Your politeness would honour the best blood in Germany ; and I shall be happy in having an opportunity of proving that I think so. You know where to find me, and may any day call upon my best power to do you service.”

Grateful for being released from farther enquiries, Louis bowed again respectfully to the Princess, but still in silence, and hastened from the apartment.

On his return to the Sieur, he refrained from chafing his present anxious state, by setting him on the rack to guess who this lady might be, who had so unluckily surprised his secretary in the Empress's *boudoir* ; and whether the accident would be productive of vexation to their proceedings, or die away, a mere indifferent circumstance. On the

illustrious invalid herself, Louis would not have cast a second thought, after he had rendered the assistance due to her sex and her indisposition : but his gratitude towards the prompt attention, or rather intuitive knowledge of his feelings, evinced by the Countess, kept the whole scene in his mind during the night ; and filled him with impatience for the morning, when he might, silently, at least, intimate to her some perception of the gratefulness which possessed him.

He went earlier than usual to the palace, on the succeeding day, both to make his apology to the Empress for having left her memorandum unfinished ; and in hopes of having a few minutes, in which to imply to the amiable favourite, the sentiment with which her goodness had inspired him. But it could only be implied generally ; to particularize the obligation, would be to betray that he was other than the Chevalier Phaffenberg : then why did he wish to find her

alone? He had no distinct apprehension, why this hope speeded him forward; only, he certainly felt a warmth in his bosom, while meditating on the past scene, more congenial to his nature, than all the raptures her various graces had before awakened. The promptitude with which she gave his supposed name, and the delicacy with which she had perceived his repugnance to answer the Princess, and had screened him from further interrogation; appeared to him a testimony of quick interest in his feelings, a reading of his mind, a sympathy with its thoughts, that demanded his utmost gratitude: — but it had obtained something more. He sighed as he approached the palace, and said to himself, “Such kindness speaks to me of home; of dear, distant Lindisfarne,

“Where heart met heart, reciprocally soft,
Each other's pillow, to repose divine!”

As he wished, he found. The lovely Otteline was alone, but in a mood of

unusual pensiveness. — She was leaning her head upon her arm, when he entered ; and there was a flush about her beautiful eyes, as if she had been weeping. She started on seeing him, and rising hastily, as if to disguise the chagrin which hung on her brow, said two or three gay words of welcome.

The discordant expressions in her face did not escape the watchful eye of growing passion. He ventured to utter a fear, that she was not well ; or that something had happened to disturb her tranquillity.

“ Nothing,” replied she.

He looked incredulous ; and she added with a smile, and a sigh, “ Chevalier, if you would preserve your quiet, never enquire into the caprices of a woman.”

“ Then it is the caprice of some woman, which now disturbs yours ?” exclaimed he, “ Is it possible that the Empress can have given pain to one she so entirely loves ?”

“Not the Empress,” replied the Countess eagerly, as if in haste to exonerate her benefactress; “she is all graciousness. But the Electress of Bavaria! She you so unfortunately assisted yesterday in this room; it is from her, that I have met with insult.”

“Insult!” re-echoed Louis, “Impossible to you!”

“I wish it were so,” replied the Countess; “but many causes make me an object of envy to that malicious Princess; and now she has triumphed.”

“Again, I must say, impossible!” cried he, “for how can she, or any woman, triumph over the Countess Althem? — Your virtues ——”

“They are my own,” interrupted she, casting down her eyes; “but my reputation is not; and yesterday put that into her power.”

Some apprehension of what the Countess would not add, gleamed upon her auditor.

“ How? — Why?” cried he.

She looked up in graceful disorder, and evidently assuming vivacity, said with a sportive smile, “ Chevalier, you are alarmed! But, indeed, it is without reason. — Believe it, my caprice, if you like; and let us dismiss the subject! It is doubling vexation to impart it.”

This generous sentiment excited him the more to persevere in knowing the cause of her ill-disguised distress; and with increased earnestness he conjured her, only to satisfy him on what she meant by saying, that yesterday had put her reputation in the power of the Electress of Bavaria?

With mingled seriousness and badinage, the Countess attempted to put him from his question; but it was done in a way rather to stimulate, than to allay his suspicion that he was concerned in her vexation; and therefore, he thought himself bound in honour, as he

was impelled by his heart, to press an explanation.

“ I was a weak creature,” returned she, “ to drop any thing of all this folly to you ; for, indeed, you will think it nonsense when you hear it ! — Only a woman’s delicacy is so very sensitive.”

“ Try me,” replied Louis, forcing an answering smile.

“ Then be the consequence on your own obstinate head !” said she, with a glance of tender archness ; but immediately casting down her eyes, as if she feared they had told too much ; in the same gay tone she continued.

“ On my mentioning to my Imperial mistress, the mal-a-propos indisposition of the Electress of Bavaria, Her Majesty commanded me to go the same night, and make the Electress a visit of enquiries. I found Her Highness without trace of illness, in her customary violent spirits, and eager to seize on any new subject for mirth. I had hardly de-

livered my message, before she began to rally me on your account; and asked so many questions respecting the object of your presence in my apartments; and, indeed, about your family and views in life, that I absolutely was lost in confusion."

The Countess paused for Louis's reply; but he was incapable of making one; and only answered her kindled cheeks, with a crimson deeper than her own. She had glanced on his countenance, and in softer accents resumed.

"I might have extricated myself from the volatile Electress, had not my embarrassment been instantly observed by that mischievous Duke Wharton; who stood by laughing all the time, and prompting his only too well inclined mistress."

A new apprehension shot into the mind of Louis; and instinctively keeping his eyes directed to the floor, he said, with a half smile, "and what did Duke Wharton prompt?"

Had he ventured one glance upward,

he would have seen the eyes of the Countess rivetted upon every feature of his face, with a steady investigation of what they might betray; while the managed tones of her voice spoke only the accents of half discovered tenderness; or, more often, the apparent assumption of a gay contempt of the raillery she described.

“ He was alone with the Electress, when I was announced;” replied she, “ and that gave Her Highness a hint to begin my persecution, by affecting to whisper him, that my intrusion would tell no tales, as she had surprised me that very morning *tête a tête* with —— I will not repeat the silly names of gallantry she called you; but they excited the curiosity of the Duke: and then she described your person as accurately as if she had been a sculptor. As her Highness proceeded in her details, I thought Wharton had lost his wits; and when she summed up her account, with nam-

ing you as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, he fell into a convulsion of laughter that amazed her as well as myself.

“ Then began such cross questionings and remarks; such banter from the Duke; such broad surmise from the Electress; that, as I would not betray the secret of my Imperial mistress, by acknowledging your visits are to her, (for visits, Duke Wharton has discovered them to be!) I was obliged to assent to Her Highness's jeering insinuations in another quarter.

“ At first I combated her charge,” added the Countess, perceiving something in the countenance of Louis, that partook more of rising displeasure, than of gratified emotion; “ I attempted to speak of your presence having been merely accidental; but Duke Wharton, with a sly laugh exclaimed, *I am a stargazer, Lady; and know that fate, not chance, guides this son of Latona, by noon-tide, and the glimpses of the moon,*

to a certain palace! — But what his errand is, I am too discreet to whisper."

Convinced that Wharton had, indeed, recognised him in the Electress's description; and, indignant that the friend, from whom he expected nothing but generosity, should thus play with a situation he must see was meant to be concealed; Louis replied with resentful scorn. "But you treated such light impertinence, with the disdain it merited?"

"I tried to do so," returned she, seeming to relapse into painful seriousness; "but the raillery of the Duke, and the knowledge he shewed of your movements, alarmed me for the secret of the Empress; and then the cruel alternative! the Electress casting all those visits to my account, with insinuations—— I cannot speak them."

Her eye had caught the flashing light of her auditor's, and abruptly stopping, she covered her face with her hands.

He stood motionless with indignation. At last forcing words from his quivering lip, he exclaimed ; “ Madam, I conjure you, tell me how the Electress, how Duke Wharton, could dare to couple your reputation and my presence with slander ! and at all hazards I will disprove it.”

“ Oh, no ;” returned she, “ you must not disprove, what duty to my Imperial mistress would not allow me to deny.”

Louis did not believe he had heard her distinctly, — he told her so. But she repeated what she had said ; assuring him, with encreased agitation, that where she so entirely loved, as she did the Empress, her life was the least sacrifice she would make to preserve her interests. He gazed on her with doubtful admiration.

“ But to be silent at an aspersion on your fair name ! that, Madam,” cried he, “ can never be a duty in your sex. A man may redeem himself from obloquy,

a woman never can! and, if I am implicated in sullyng your honour, I repeat again, I will disprove the slander at the peril of my life.”

“ That can only be done between man and man ;” said the Countess, in a collected voice ; though inwardly alarmed for the consequence of a duel between her lover and the Duke. “ And here the provocation came from the opposite sex. Duke Wharton merely amused himself with my confusion, after the Electress had presumed to make her charge. But were it otherwise, a violent assertion of my honour is beyond your power. Your life, Chevalier,” added she, raising her eyes to his face, “ is your own to give ! but not the safety of the *Sieur Ignatius* ; not the honour of the *Baron de Ripperda* ; not the future happiness, public and private, of the *Empress Elizabeth* ! These, and the other momentous interests you are so well aware of, all depend upon keeping secret from the Electress

of Bavaria and her counsellors, the purport of your visits to these apartments. You could be admitted but for one of two reasons: to me, or to the Empress. And when hardly pressed by Her Highness last night; to avoid the treason of betraying my mistress, I was obliged, ——” she turned away her blushing face as she added, “not merely, not to deny, but to sanction the suspicion, which caused the tears in which you surprised me.”

Louis stood paralyzed at this last disclosure. But when he saw that tears flowed afresh from her eyes, and streamed down her flushed cheeks, as she moved from him to leave the room; he flew towards her, and catching her by the gown, implored her, in an agitated voice, to stop and hear him. She turned on him with a look of gentle reproach, of dissolving tenderness, that bereft him at once of all consideration; and what

he said, what he avowed, he knew not, till he found her hand clasped to his lips, and heard her say — “ After this, I need not blush to turn my eyes on the only way that can now redeem my name !” She spoke with an enchanting smile, and added, “ It will disprove the slanderous part of our adversary’s accusation, without betraying our cause ; or risking a life, perhaps too precious to me !”

Before he could reply, she heard the steps of Elizabeth in the adjoining chamber ; and sliding her hand from his impassioned grasp, disappeared through the conservatory. He was in so much agitation when the Empress entered, that she perceived it ; and guessing the cause, did not notice it ; but, wishing her favourite full success in this her own peculiar affair, she dismissed that of politics in a very few words ; and graciously received Louis’s excuse for the unfinished minutes of the day before.

As he proceeded to the Chateau, where he was to complete some transcripts before he returned to the College, he tried to think on what had passed, but all within him was in tumult. The hours of his labour, and of his meditation, were the same; he could not tranquillize the strange whirlwind of emotions which raged in his mind. He recalled, again and again, before the tribunal of his judgment, the particulars of the scene which had just passed; but they appeared in such broken apparitions, that he could reduce nothing to certainty, nothing on which he could lay his hand, and say, "It is so."

At one moment, indignation fired him against the part Duke Wharton had taken in it; and, in the next, he arraigned the wayward fate, which had compelled him to merit all the Duke's resentment, by his own apparently insulting conduct in the palace gallery.— Then his imagination, all in a blaze, ran

over the celestial charms of the exquisite creature, whose unreceding hand he had pressed to his lips — to his heart! He felt her eye-beams still agitating its inmost recesses; but he did not feel that heart quite consent to his often-repeated exclamation — “She loves me — and I am happy!” He did not feel that instant union of spirits; that ineffable communion of heart with heart, and soul with soul, which he had ever believed the pledge of mutual love: — That mystery of the soul, which, even in earth, asserts its immortal nature! The beautiful Otteline was still a beautiful surface to him; an idol to be adored. But he found not that sense of perfect sympathy, shooting from her dear presence through all his being, which would make him cry aloud, “I love her, and her alone!”

Dissatisfied with himself for this fastidiousness, when he ought to have been all transport, he turned to the hour of

meeting the *Sieur*, with the feelings of a man in a dream, from which he was doubtful that he would not be glad to awake.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Louis entered the cloister which led to the Sieur's apartment, he met Martini hurrying towards him.

“ Well arrived, Signor !” cried he, “ I was coming to the Chateau in quest of you. There is a noble bustle in my master's chamber.”

“ By your countenance, no ill news ?” said Louis, though not unapprehensive that some mischievous consequence had transpired from his unfortunate surprisal by the Electress of Bavaria.

“ Not that I know of,” cried Martini ; “ but a little motion more than ordinary always makes me merry. I love stirring, gloriously ! And my master and a *booted-and-spurred* have been at high words these two hours.”

With nothing so much in his mind, as some anticipated exposure from the malice of the Electress, Louis proceeded to the chamber with a more eager step than inclination. He found the *Sieur* on his couch, with the table before him spread with opened packets, and a person standing beside him in the dress of a courier. At some distance stood two other travellers. The courier was talking in Italian with great earnestness. Ignatius listened with his usual lofty attention: but when his vigilant eye caught the figure of Louis advancing from behind a dark curtain which divided the apartment, he put up his hand with an air of authority to the speaker, who instantly became silent.

“Louis,” said the *Sieur*, addressing his pupil in German, “here is news from Madrid, to raise me from the tomb; had the poniards of my enemies been keen enough to have laid me there! — France, whose bonds were so ruinously dear to the heart of the King of Spain, has cut

the cord herself; and, by a stroke of insult, for which even his partiality cannot find an excuse.”

Louis's heart was lightened of the apprehensions with which he had entered; and, with glad congratulations, reflected the unusual animation which shone in the eyes of Ignatius. The Sieur then ordered the courier to retire with Martini, who would take care of him, until he could see him again. The other two travellers also obeyed the beckon of his hand; and in Spanish, he directed them likewise, to put themselves under the protection of the Italian valet.

The room being left to the statesman and his secretary, the Sieur, with a less reserved air, motioned Louis to approach him; and when they were seated, the former opened a circumstantial detail of what had occasioned this abrupt rupture between the courts of Versailles and Saint Ildefonso.

During the late regency of the Duke of Orleans, a treaty of marriage had been entered into between the young King of France, Louis XV. and Philip's daughter the Infanta Maria-Anna, then a mere child. According to the custom of the times, she was sent to Paris, to receive an education befitting the future bride of a French Monarch; and, at a certain age she was to be solemnly affianced. On the death of the Duke of Orleans, and the promotion of the Duke of Bourbon to the functions of prime-minister, the cabinet of France seemed to change its measures with regard to Spain; at least encroachments were made, which aroused the suspicions of Philip's Queen; and she tried to awaken the jealousy of her husband against the new minister. Attached to the house from whence he sprung, and inclined to put the best construction on all its actions, it was no easy task to make the royal grandson of Louis the Fourteenth comprehend that

the Duke of Bourbon never considered the interest of Spain in his policy. Some transactions, more than dubious in their principle and tendency, at last made King Philip allow a possibility that he might confide too implicitly in his French relations; and, after much argument from the Baron Ripperda, and more entreaty from his Queen, he was at length persuaded to counterpoise the self-aggrandising spirit they had detected, by commencing a secret negociation with Austria. Still, however, habitual partiality to his native country hung about the heart of Philip, and caused great uneasiness in the minds of the Queen and the Baron, under whose auspices the mysterious embassy set forth. As the negociation rapidly proceeded, the King often dropped hints on the consequences of precipitancy; and frequently filled them with alarm, lest he should at last refuse his royal sanction to the completion of their labours, and so involve

themselves and their cause in utter infamy.

The Duke of Bourbon was indeed actuated by different principles, both political and personal, from those which had impelled the Duke of Orleans to propose new bonds of alliance between the royal families of France and Spain. He disliked the Spanish marriage altogether; and, besides so many years must elapse before the Infanta could be of age for the espousals; and the health of the anticipated bridegroom was so precarious, it seemed no improbability that his death, in the mean-while, might transfer the royal succession to the house of Orleans. This was an aggrandisement of that ambitious family, which, the no less ambitious Duke of Bourbon could not contemplate with patience; and at this juncture Duke Wharton appeared at his elbow, as if conjured there on purpose to set the two great heads of the House of Bourbon at lasting enmity. He sus-

pected that something clandestine was going on between the courts of Spain and Austria; and having substantiated his suspicions, he left Vienna for Paris, a few days after his rencontre with Louis de Montemar on the Danube. He revealed to the Duke of Bourbon all that he had discovered; and urged him to save his branch of the royal stock, from being over-topped by that of Orleans or of Spain; by immediately adopting an entire new policy from that of his predecessor. As a first movement, he proposed a marriage for the young King with some Princess of maturer years than the Spanish Infanta. Bourbon readily embraced this suggestion, which had been some time floating in his own mind. And, on the two Dukes consulting who this Princess should be, (each having his own particular reasons), their choice fell on Maria, the daughter of Stanislaus Letzinsky, the ex-king of Poland. Wharton undertook to prepare the mind of His

Majesty to accept the alternative; and in the interview, he found that the docile Louis was easily prevailed on to exchange a bride still in the school-room, for a blooming young woman, full of accomplishments and graces.

The views of Wharton in this manœuvre, were still directed to his favourite project of reinstating the Stuarts. At present, France, and Spain, and Austria, were all equally estranged from their cause. By creating a rupture between the two former powers, he divided their interests; implicated their allies; and necessarily threw France again into the scale of the Stuart and Bavarian claims. Philip had declared himself openly for George of Brunswick; and was on the point of signing the pragmatic sanction; this Wharton knew: and by mixing the adversaries of the latter scheme of succession, with the political rivals of England, he returned to Vienna with a pro-

mised accession to his party, that made him omnipotent in the Bavarian councils.

To prevent any opposition to the proposed alliance, from the remonstrances of Spain, as soon as the Duke of Wharton had left Paris, (which he did with the negligent air of a mere visitor to the widowed Queen at St. Germain's;) the Duke of Bourbon pursued the advantage that nobleman had gained for him, and persuaded the King to send the Infanta back to Madrid without any previous notice to her royal parents. She was accompanied by a lady of honour, and an ecclesiastic of high dignity, to be her protectors on the way; and to deliver a suitable apology on the urgency of the case, to the King and Queen of Spain. When the abbot and his young charge were so unexpectedly announced to the presence of the royal pair, the good priest was too much agitated, to fulfil his instructions with the diplomatic dignity he was enjoined. He fell at once on his knees,

and declared his errand in confusion and anguish of spirit. The astonishment and grief of Philip shewed itself in silence and tears; but the mortification of his Queen burst into rage and invective. When the abbot offered the letters of explanation, she dashed them out of his hand; and tearing the picture of Louis the Fifteenth from her bracelet, trampled it under her feet. All now was uproar. The French ambassador, and every French consul were ordered to depart the Spanish territories without delay; and when Philip did find words to express his sense of the injury he had received from the hand he most trusted, he declared he never would be reconciled to France, till the Duke of Bourbon should repair to Madrid and ask his pardon on his knees. "Hah!" cried the Queen, "It shall not be long, before that French cyclops finds the arrows of more than one King in his eye!" And, to make good her threat, she immediately dispatched a trusty mes-

senger to Ignatius ; giving him full powers to relinquish all the contested points which had retarded the negociation ; and at any sacrifice to conclude a marriage between her son Don Carlos, and the Arch-duchess Maria-Theresa, the presumptive heiress to the Imperial Crown. Some other instructions, dear to the policy of Ripperda, were added ; which, if brought to bear, would give the preponderance of power, still more to Spain and Austria ; and place the French, where she had dashed the portrait of their Monarch, at her feet.

Louis de Montemar passed several hours in close conference with the Sieur Ignatius on these events ; on the circumstances which led to them, (though the share Wharton had in the leading movement was not then known ;) on the consequent instructions from the Spanish sovereigns ; and in settling how much of the whole, Louis was to declare to the Empress and her minister, in

making the commanded concessions, so as to appear rather to give than to concede.

“ You must manage the preliminaries to-night with Sinzendorf,” said the Sieur, “ But to-morrow, whether it be to return on my litter or in my hearse, I will see the Empress myself.—When the triumphal arch is ready,” added he, with one of those smiles, which visited his dark countenance like the shooting of a star ; “ the wounded hero is unworthy its honours, that will not venture his life to pass through !”

Louis bowed his assent to the Sieur's observation, with a smile bright as his own ; and, soon after, the College bell reminded him that the time of his audience with the Chancellor drew near. On his rising to obey its summons, Ignatius looked up from some letters he was writing, and told him to rejoin him in that chamber the next morning by day-break. “ To-morrow,” added he, “ will epi-

tomise the history of Europe for many a future year; and be the deciding epoch of your destiny.”

The usual time of Louis's visit to the Chancellor Sinzendorf was an hour before midnight; immediately after His Excellency had left the card-table of the Emperor. And, as from the intricacy of his new communications with the minister, Louis's present conference was much longer than ordinary, it was an hour beyond midnight before he left the Chancellor's apartments.

Hurrying along, to get out of the interior galleries of the palace at so unseasonable an hour, at an abrupt turning into the large lighted rotunda where most of the passages terminated, he ran violently against a person wrapped in a splendid pelisse. He looked up, to apologize, and beheld Duke Wharton. Louis sprang from the side of the Duke, as if struck back by electricity: but Wharton grasped his arm. With

an averted face, and a heart yearning to embrace the friend, whose presence, and whose touch, obliterated all remembrance of resentment, Louis made another ineffectual struggle to break away; but the Duke, in a gaily affectionate voice, exclaimed, — “ I have clutched you, Chevalier Phaffenberg! and if you were Chevalier Proteus himself, you should not elude these ten fingers!” As he spoke, he threw his other arm round the waist of his friend, and seized his opposite arm also.

“ Release me, Duke Wharton!” cried Louis, fully remembering his double promise to Ignatius and to the Empress, and striving to recall the circumstances at the Electress’s, which had excited his indignation:— “ This is a liberty ——”

“ That is nothing between friends,” interrupted the Duke, in the same happy tone; “ but if we are enemies, I am too old a soldier to release the prisoner, who may only want to cut my throat!”

“ Duke Wharton!” returned Louis,

fearful of being subdued by accents so eloquent of former confidence; "when you see I would avoid you, this detention is at least ungenerous. By the friendship you claim, and you have; no longer withhold me! one day I will thank you for your forbearance."

"You would thank me for that, to which I make no pretensions! In this life of hard knocks, neither broken heads nor broken hearts can be healed by the promise of an unction. And therefore excuse me, if I do not forbear seizing the present sweetener of the wormwood you cast at me a week or two ago in these passages!"

Louis struggled with his subdued heart, and sighed convulsively, as he unconsciously rested in the arms that held him prisoner.

"You have my creed of defence, in this selfish world!" resumed the Duke, "and so, my dear de Montemar, come with me, and whatever may be your

secret services here, they shall be as safe in my breast as in your own."

With a gasping breath, Louis declared he must not remain with him another moment.

"What then, your Pastor-Uncle fears me, even here. He fears the lion, when his lamb is among wolves! I tell you what Louis, — there is more in my heart towards you, than you will believe, or may deserve! But, I repeat, come with me, and you shall have that heart on the table!"

Happy to exonerate his venerable uncle, Louis impetuously declared that his interdict was withdrawn; but that other motives, not then to be explained, rendered a temporary estrangement as compulsory as ever. Wharton exulted in this amnesty from Mr. Athelstone; and urged it, with every argument and device in his magic circlet. He was prevailing, vehement, and gaily reproachful; but, as he persevered in all beyond the usual

measure of patience, Louis could not but at last feel such constancy very like persecution; and very unlike what he should have anticipated from the free spirit of the Duke. "But," whispered a monitor within him, "was the Duke's wanton sport with your concealment, when he recognised you, even under a false name, in the discourse at the Electress's; was it consistent with belief in his candour? With his present professions of attachment?"

As Louis stood in his trammelling arms, and with a downward face thought of these things, he became displeased; and, with a firm air, repeated his request to be released. The Duke persisted to hold him fast, with some gay badinage on the coil of the crested dragon; but Louis, determined to be no longer put from his duty, said, even sternly, — "Duke Wharton, let me go? This compulsion is insufferable, I will not be detained."

"De Montemar," returned the Duke,

in a solemn voice, immediately releasing one arm, while he still held the other ; “ I have wrestled thus long with your caprice, to shew you that I had forbearance ; but I now read your changeful heart : go where it leads you. I once thought it was devoted to friendship, and to noble sacrifice ! “ But,” added he, after a short pause, and with a disdainful smile, “ you are not what you were — you cling to the foot of the ladder, I believed you even too proud to mount, — and so I bid you farewell !”

As he spoke, he relaxed his hand from the grasp he held of Louis’s arm, and with a smothered sigh, which he sought to hide under a cough, he turned hastily across the corridor. Louis’s heart smote him.

“ I have been selfish and arrogant ! I have been accessible to ill impressions ; and, even now, to suspicions of the motives of him, I once so devoutly honoured. — Alas !” said he, to himself,

“ I have not acted like a friend! I might have broken from him, since duty required it, but I need not thus have wounded him !”

As at one instant of time all these thoughts flashed over his mind, he stood, without attempting to follow his friend ; but he could not help exclaiming, — “ Wharton !” Wharton still passed on. “ He quits me in deserved resentment !” said Louis, his heart overflowing with contrition ; and extricating his feet from the spot, where they had seemed rooted, he made two or three swift steps towards him.

“ Wharton !” repeated he, when he drew near, “ that farewell must not be for ever !”

Wharton turned round with a lofty and serious air ; — “ and, why should you wish it otherwise ?”

“ Because,” returned Louis, catching his hand, “ I value your friendship as my life, but not beyond my honour.”

Wharton gazed a moment on his agitated countenance. In a softened voice, though yet maintaining his unusual gravity, he replied, "you could not suppose I should ask you to betray that in yourself, which is my own impugnable estate!"

Louis did not speak; but, with bent eyes, to conceal the tears which filled them, pressed the Duke's hand. Wharton returned the cordial re-assurance; and with a smile playing through his seriousness, he added, "and least of all, when one of the dear sex, I have so long adored to my cost, holds your honour in the charming fetters you have just been hugging to your heart!"

Louis dropped the hand he was so affectionately clasping; and exclaimed with energy, "by that honour, I swear that no amorous passion brought me hither to-night!"

"Nor any night? nor any morning?" replied Wharton, with more of his wonted

gaiety! "I will believe just what you please; only make me a vow that she shall not absorb you entirely; and, though I admire the lady and love the sex, I will promise never to wish a reversion in my favour!"

Louis was vexed at this wild speech. He saw, that so far from Wharton having a suspicion that political objects employed him at Vienna, he really believed that his friend's visits to the palace were actuated by a passion for the Countess Alheim. Louis could not shut his eyes on another conviction; that the Duke dishonoured the nature of the passion he supposed, by regarding it rather as an affair *pour passer le tems*, than as a serious attachment for life. But, in spite of his admiration of the Countess, and of what had passed between them, he felt an insurmountable repugnance to say in solemn, considered language, that his visits to her were to terminate in an indissoluble union; and, with a sudden

bitterness of spirit towards Wharton himself, and the entanglements of his situation, he exclaimed, with a severe look at his friend, "you distract me, by this determination to believe that I am engaged in the sort of connection that my soul abhors."

"And what, dear de Montemar, does your soul abhor?" returned the Duke, drawing his friend's arm within his, and walking with him down the passage; "the connection mine abhors is matrimony; for a young Xantippe, under its privilege, even now clips my sides with her everlasting bonds, like the spikes of a penance-girdle, piercing into my heart."

"By the current of your wild attack," said Louis, with a crimsoned cheek, "I could not have guessed that you meant an attachment which pointed to so serious an end."

"Serious enough, at the best!" replied the Duke, laughing; "and, in my

case, I should say it was at the worst; could I not suppose a quality or two even less to my liking, in your fair lady! She is too much of a female Machiavel for my easy nature, and would have me in the state-dungeons before our honeymoon had shot her horns."

Louis was silent, and his heart beat, even audibly, with its contending emotions. Should he speak a word more, he might betray the secret of the Empress, — of the Sieur, — of his father, — of the Sovereign of the country, to which that father had devoted him!

Wharton and he were now at the outward gate of the palace. Louis attempted to withdraw his arm, but the Duke held it fast. "Nay, nay, my eager Lover! you will not find her in the street! you must sup with me to-night."

"Not for the world."

"How?"

"We must part here, dear Wharton,

and part friends, — eternal friends ! But ask no questions.”

“ I will be hanged,” cried the Duke, “ if you are not in such awful mystery that, if you do not go home with me, and let me see that occult soul of thine through the chrystaline of generous Burgundy, I shall believe (added he in a whisper) that you are too well with the Empress herself.”

“ Wharton !” cried Louis, dashing the Duke from him, “ you will make me hate you.”

“ You dare not for your life and honours, dear petulant boy !” cried the Duke, with a frank-hearted laugh ; “ and, till we meet in feast or fray, give me thy gauntlet !” He stretched out his hand. Louis regretted the violence with which he had spoken ; but feeling the precipice on which he stood, and dreading further detention, he gave his hand with evident hesitation. Wharton shook it with gay cordiality, and said in his kindest

accents, "thou faithless one! dost thou suspect I am going to realize the frog and the raven, and tear thee between my beak and claw!"

He then pressed the hand he held, with the warmth of a full heart; and as he felt Louis's shake in the grasp, he added with strong emphasis; "well, haste away! but I would snatch you from the snares which misled my youthful feet, in the paths you have now entered. I would lead you, where you may plant honour, and reap renown. Oh, de Montemar, I would put a royal heart in that breast, whose pulses are fed by the blood of kings! — Start not! — But thou must not grovel, and creep, and follow — where you may rise and lead! — De Montemar, thou art enslaved and mocked. — Come with me, and you are again free."

"Not for the best blood in my heart!" exclaimed Louis, now exulting in his knowledge of the great cause to which

he had devoted himself. "You are mistaken Wharton; and again, I must say, farewell!"

"Be it so," returned the Duke, relinquishing his hand; "but you will remember Philip Wharton, when it is out of the power of his irrepressible friendship to extricate the son of the rich, the great, Baron de Ripperda, from the bonds and bondage of a too fair Semiramis and her subtler confidant!"

Louis now understood that the Duke could not have meant to have referred at all to a political slavery, which his former speech seemed to imply; but that still he intended only to warn him against the vassalage of the heart. Wharton certainly said enough to open the mind of his friend to some suspicion of the perfection of his fair mistress's character; but before he could rally himself to compose some safe answer, the Duke had disappeared into the universal darkness of the outer court.

CHAP. VIII.

THE *Sieur Ignatius* did as he had determined. He went, and alone, to the *Empress* the following morning. What he had to propose, soon made her call the chancellor to the conference; and during the discussion, the *Sieur* so ably adapted the mutual pretensions of the rival monarchs, to the eagerness of their consorts to conclude a treaty, that nothing remained to be done, when he left the apartment, but to obtain the Imperial sign manual, to what the *Empress* and her minister so heartily approved.

As *Ignatius* put a large casket of golden arguments, for certain members of the council, into the hands of *Sinzendorff*, *Elizabeth* promised that the Emperor's decision should be sent to *Vienna*, as

soon as he could collect his counsellors around him at the Luxemburg; to which palace he meant to go next morning, for a few days. Meanwhile she recommended to the Sieur, and through him, to his secretary, that they should keep in strict seclusion; for she apprehended the indiscreet stir which the Queen of Spain had made on the affront put upon her daughter, would excite an immediate attention in the ambassadors at Madrid, to some anticipation of her meditated revenge. All know that the political train laid by these honourable spies of nations, is as subtle as it is long, devious, and invisible; and where suspicion once points, it is but the word of a moment to set the whole in a blaze. To avert such a catastrophe to Isabella's too open threats against France, Ignatius adopted this advice, as it coincided with his own judgment; and, accordingly, he seemed to immure himself as during his wounds; but he was amply

occupied, in arrangements, which only awaited the fiat of the Emperor, to be brought into immediate action.

During this suspense, Ignatius received accounts from Sinzendorff, which proved the wisdom of their caution. He informed him, that visits at unseasonable hours had been repeatedly exchanged between the French and other foreign ambassadors resident at Vienna; and that he knew, from indisputable authority, that a messenger had arrived from Paris, who was closeted with the French minister for many hours; and that the same night His Excellency was seen, without any of his accustomed attendants, gliding into the palace of the Electress of Bavaria. In another letter, Sinzendorff communicated to the Sieur, that he had certain intelligence of a private supper which had been given the preceding evening in the Electress's *boudoir*; and no women were present but herself and her Lady of the Key; while the men were the

French ambassador, the Dutch Minister, a French philosopher from Berlin, the fierce ex-chancellor Count Stahlberg, and the Duke of Wharton. What was the subject of their deliberations, Sinzendorff could give no information; but he did not doubt that it brooded mischief to the present crisis between Austria and Spain.

In Louis's nocturnal visits to the College, he gladly saw that little inconvenience remained to the Sieur from his dangerous attack, excepting incidental head-aches, and the scar on his forehead, which being recently cicatrised, he still covered with a black fillet. The cadaverous hue of his complexion was hardly deepened by his confinement; but Louis occasionally saw a more than common fire flash from his over-shadowed eye, as he accidentally looked up from the papers he scrutinized. During the investigation, he never spoke more than

to ask a question, or to give a direction respecting the business on which he was engaged; and generally answered his pupil's respectful adieu for the night, with a silent, though gracious nod.

Louis's long hours of solitude, (for the whole of the Imperial family had accompanied the Emperor to his spring palace;) were passed at the Chateau. And after he had performed his, now brief vocation for the day, he generally read German authors from the Jesuits' library; or walked in the weedy wilderness, which had once been a garden. He now, neither regarded the swift-flowing Danube, nor the gay groups, which on foot or in carriages, appeared in the distance on its margin. His meditations were all self centered; on the past, the present, and the future. Often, during his deep reverie, he wondered at himself, that his mind should wander, and at such a crisis, from the great affair in which he was a sharer. A year ago, had he speculated

on what would have occupied his thoughts in so important a political era of his life, he should have said, — “ Exultation in the grand results of my father’s patriotic genius ; and satisfaction that my novice talents had been employed in the glorious achievement ! ”

But on the reverse, while he sat at the feet of statesmen, and was the agent between negotiating sovereigns, he found himself dwelling, hour after hour, on the private feelings of his heart. He was ready to quarrel with himself for this wretched perversity. In the quiet vales of Northumberland, he had lived in the full enjoyment of these feelings ; but then his vagrant thoughts refused to dwell on tranquil happiness. He panted for distant realms, fields of toil, of perils, and renown. He was now in the midst of some of these invoked stations for action ; and yet his inconsistent spirit would not abide in the scenes it had chosen ! His meditations would extricate themselves from

their patriotic objects, and with obstinate tenacity fasten themselves on the most selfish considerations: — on the friend he had loved, and had fled from! on the woman, he believed he loved, and yet was glad to fly!

He recalled the several warnings he had received, at home and abroad, against the Duke; but the recollection of the natural and acquired advantages he possessed over all other men he had known, presented themselves of their own accord to Louis; and his spell-bound eyes, not seeing where the scale turned, he dismissed the subject. The image of the fair Otteline glided before his mind's eye, like the descent of Iris from the rainbow: all brilliancy and ambrosial beauty. He had only to articulate her name, to make the pulse pause in his heart, and a dissolving sensibility steal over all his senses.

“And yet,” he murmured to himself, “fair as thou art, I feel a chill on my

soul, whenever I think of pledging it to thee for ever. Oh, wherefore?" cried he, "she is lovely, she is tender; but she has not that elevated look in those beautiful eyes, which used to mingle my highest thoughts with the soul of Cornelia! She has not that ineffable glance of exclusive affection, which shoots direct to the heart, and kindles a faith there, no doubts can extinguish!"

There was something in the parting words of the Duke, respecting the Empress and her *subtle confidant*, which had adhered to the memory of Louis, and continued to harass him with conjectures. By that confidant, the Sieur Ignatius, or the Countess Alheim, might have been understood; but it could not be the Sieur; as Wharton appeared so unsuspecting of a political errand taking his friend to the palace, that he avowed his belief at once, it was an amatory attraction.

"And was she *subtle*?" Louis's heart

revolted at the question ; though he could not disguise from his clearer judgment, that she had herself suggested to him the only incontrovertible mode of silencing the scandal, she had thought herself obliged by duty to sanction as a truth.

“ It was not what I like,” said Louis, trying to excuse her to himself. But had he uttered his own principles upon the subject, he would have said, — “ It is what I not merely blame, but shrink from, as an unpardonable dereliction from female modesty !”

But in this case, he thought her zeal for the Empress, and her prepossession in his favour, had obliterated from her mind all consideration of what was due to herself ; and the impelling motives made him find an apology and a pardon for the amiable delinquent.

“ Yes,” cried he, “ she sacrificed her native delicacy, in a double respect to the disinterestedness of her attachment. Did I not see the soft lustre of her eyes

kindle with the blushes on her cheeks, and look downwards, to conceal the graceful shame, as she insinuated the delightful alternative !”

Louis was now far advanced in persuading himself that all was delightful, which, he believed he was now bound in honour to make his own, whether it were to his wishes or not. “ Her conduct could not be *subtlety*,” continued he, “ for she is ignorant that I am the *son of the rich, the great Ripperda*. Oh, Wharton, you wrong her ! there is nothing in my apparent present station to make a union with me, an object of interest with the favourite of the Empress of Germany. She must prefer me, for myself alone ; and I am a wretch of ingratitude ever to have found it necessary to convince myself by these doubting arguments !”

In the midst of such musings, he was surprised one evening, by Gerard putting into his hand a letter addressed to, “ The

Chevalier de Phaffenberg.” The handwriting was unknown to him; indeed, evidently a feigned one. He enquired whence it came. Gerard replied, he did not know: but the letter was brought by a man in the dark, who left it without saying a word. Louis broke the seal, and read as follows: —

“The carriage which conveys you to the Jesuits’ College will be beset to-night in your usual route through the deserted street of Saint Xavier. The papers, of which you are to be the bearer, will be taken from you. Resistance would be vain, for the assailants are numerous. To avoid the loss of your trust, and perhaps of your life, should your temerity contest the matter, take a different path to-night. But to no one, excepting your friend the Jesuit, mention this warning. Were it suspected, he that writes it, would soon be put beyond the power of repeating the service.”

“*Tuesday Evening.*”

Louis thought of the attempted assassination of Ignatius. The letter he held in his hand was a second confirmation that, notwithstanding the Sieur's severe precautions, the mysterious business of himself and his secretary was so little a secret to its enemies, that they knew exactly where to point even the most iniquitous means, when they thought such expedient to obtain information, or to create preventions. Who the anonymous friend was, who ran the risque implied at the close of the letter, Louis had no hesitation to believe must be the Duke of Wharton; for the Sieur had hinted to him, only the night before, that he knew the Duke was one of a secret committee who sat nightly at the Bavarian apartments. Wharton must then have discovered that his friend's visits to the palace had a higher aim than gallantry; and Louis felt something like a proud satisfaction in the conviction. The letter, he trusted, would be a sufficient pledge to

Ignatius of Wharton's fidelity to his friend; and that whatever might be his bonds to a party, they could not tie his faith to connivance with a dishonourable act. This head of the subject being settled in his own mind; and being enabled, by the warning, to avoid the threatened violence; he would have given up his thoughts to the delicious enjoyment of gratefulness to so dear a friend, had he not trembled to think how far the Duke of Wharton's repulsed recognition of him, might have led to so full a discovery respecting the secret movements of the *Sieur* and himself.

He saw that he must apprise Ignatius of the knowledge his enemies had acquired of his proceedings; and, in doing so, shew the letter he had just received; and, while he declared his belief that Duke Wharton was the friendly writer, be obliged to narrate what he had hitherto concealed: — his meeting, and at last enforced discourse with the Duke. As

Louis reflected on the real harmlessness of that discourse; and on the necessity, at the present momentous juncture, to make his guardian master of every circumstance that might bear at all towards it; he felt the folly of his reserve: and though at the time he had persuaded himself that his silence arose from reluctance to agitate needlessly a wounded man, his conscience now accused him of mental cowardice, in shrinking from the pain he anticipated to himself in the torturing discussion.

“In flying one stroke,” said he, “I have incurred twenty. Had I spoken at the time, I should only have had to narrate an event which happened without my seeking; and the worst could only have been the Sieur’s suspicions of the Duke wishing to draw me to the Bavarian interest. But now, he may see something clandestine in my silence; and at best consider me imprudent and mean, if not absolutely insincere and worthless.”

Though harrassed by these reflections, he was not negligent of his trust. When he got into the carriage that was to convey him as usual to the College, it was himself only he committed to the casualties of the evening. He did not take one of the papers with him ; thinking it possible that the assailants, missing their prey in the old deserted street, would way-lay him (as their emissaries had probably done Ignatius,) in the college porch. The warning-letter, (which he held in his hand, to tear piece-meal should he be attacked ;) he thought would fully account to the Sieur for this precaution. Having placed his pistols in his waist-coat, he ordered the coachman to drive to the College by a circuit in an opposite direction from Saint Xavier's ; and being obeyed ; without any sign of molestation he reached the Jesuit's cell at the accustomed hour.

The result of this dreaded interview with the stern friend of his father, was very

different from what Louis had expected. On his entrance, he presented the anonymous warning, as his apology for not having risked the usual evening quota of state-papers through the threatened danger. Ignatius examined the hand writing and the seal. The former was a cramped text; the latter, a common diapered stamp.

“Who in Vienna can know you, to be thus interested in you, even as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg? You have been seen by none out of the routine of our business; excepting, indeed, that one accidental meeting with the Electress of Bavaria and her attendant! Surely a five minutes’ glimpse of your handsome person, Louis,” added the Sieur with a half smile, “could not have wrought so potently on the latter lady, as to excite her to such perilous intervention!”

“I am not quite the coxcomb to suppose it,” returned Louis with an answering smile, but a flushed cheek, from the

consciousness of what he had to confess. Without circumlocution, or reserve, but with eyes cast down, and a varying complexion, he began and continued the whole narration of Duke Wharton's seeing him twice in the galleries of the palace; his escape from him the first time, and the Duke's consequent remarks to the Countess Altheim: but that on their second rencontre he had found it impossible to break away, without suffering the conversation, which he now circumstantially repeated.

Ignatius spoke not a word during the agitated recital of his pupil. While making his confession, Louis did not venture to look up under this awful silence; but when he concluded, and his eyes were still riveted to the ground, the Sieur put his hand on his, and said in an emphatic voice — “This honest narrative has established your character with me. I see by your looks, that it is not left to another to lecture you on

the danger of your late concealments : I leave you, therefore, in that respect to your own admonitions. But I will not withhold my entire approbation of the dexterity with which you parried every question of that serpent Englishman. Do not frown at the severity of the epithet. Did you know him, as well as he is known at Paris and in this capital, you would not doubt that he has many properties of that wreathing reptile besides his glassy surface !”

“ And yet, Sir,” cried Louis, “ I believe it is he who has ventured his safety to give me this warning !”

“ It may be,” returned the Sicur, “ and he no less a serpent still. But for your escape, and that of the papers, I am obliged to him, and we will dismiss the subject. There is another, on which I must give you a necessary hint ; the Countess Alheim.”

At that name, the conscious blood rushed into the before-blanchèd cheek of

Louis, and his heart beat with an alarm to which he could assign no cause. The Sieur paused a moment or two, regarding his pupil with a steady look before he went on.

“ You have too much of the woman in your face, young man ;” said he, “ to keep your own secret, however faithful you may be of another’s. I see the pretty favourite has gained her point with your heart ; but do not allow your lips to commit your honour, till this public affair is finished, and you may consult your father’s opinion of such an alliance. A rash step here would offend him for ever.”

Louis bowed his acquiescence to this command, but it was not with a constrained air. The Sieur saw that he was grateful for the gentleness with which his confession had been treated, and respectfully obedient to the injunction which concluded the discourse.

Louis returned to the Chateau by the

same track he had left it, and therefore reached his home in safety. The next day passed as the former; and having just finished his hermit stroll under the silver light of a bright March moon, he was slowly retracing his steps to the house, when he met Gerard approaching him with information that the Sieur Ignatius awaited him in the saloon. This unexpected visit alarmed Louis. He instantly feared that some fatal turn had taken place with regard to the completion of their labours, and that the Sieur had come to announce it. He hastened however to his summons.

Wrapped as before in his large dark mantle, Ignatius was standing in the middle of the room. The black fillet which pressed down his heavy eye-brows, and the hearse-like plumes that pended over them, cast such flickering shadows over his grey visage, that he seemed to Louis, as he stood in the moon-light, more like

the awful spectre of his guardian, than his living self.

Louis thought he saw his fears confirmed. He approached, he drew very near to him, and still the Sieur did not speak. Louis could not bear the suspense, and exclaimed, "Sir, you have ill news to tell me?"

"Look on my face," replied Ignatius, in a tone of voice from which neither good nor evil could be gathered, "and try to read what sort of news the disciplined blood of a tried politician will declare."

Louis fixed his eyes as he was commanded, but it was with apprehension; for he thought this beginning was to prepare him for the ruin of their cause. His eyes shrunk from the proud fire which shone in the steady gaze of the Sieur. It might arise from the pride of triumph, or be the bright emanation of determined fortitude! But the latter idea

possessed his pupil. The extent of the misfortune he dreaded to hear ; as, again and again he had been warned that his father's honour was involved in the fate of this treaty.

“ Speak, dear Sir !” cried he, “ I cannot guess what has happened, from your countenance.”

“ Yet,” said Ignatius, “ it is easy to interpret what you believe ought to be legible there, from yours ! But, Louis de Montemar, if you are to follow your father's career, to this moveless complexion you must come at last. Else, vain will it be to discipline your tongue, if your unmanageable blood betray the story. Know then, that our labours have been successful. The Emperor has given his full consent to every demand of Spain.”

“ Thank God !” exclaimed Louis, clasping his hands, and dropping into a chair. The Sieur seated himself beside him, and without noticing his emotion,

(for all the son was then in Louis's heart) he entered into the details of the business. The Imperial family had returned that morning to Vienna. The Empress immediately summoned Ignatius to attend her. He obeyed; and received from Her Majesty those particulars of the Emperor's assent, which were now recounted to the attentive secretary. The Sieur then added, that after he quitted the palace, he referred for further instructions to a packet which the last dispatch from Spain had brought in the Queen's letter-case; and which being superscribed to himself, with the additional words, "only to be opened in the event of the Emperor acceding to our proposals;" he had laid it aside until the present, which was the appointed moment.

"As the conditions were fulfilled," continued the Sieur, "I broke the seal; and the contents are these. A letter from the King, commanding me to an-

nounce to their Cæsarean Majesties the entrance of his ambassador into Vienna, in the course of eight-and-forty hours after the information should be communicated to them. And that ambassador, Louis de Montemar," added Ignatius, "is your father."

Louis sprang from his seat. The Sieur rose also, and continued; "in reward of his high services, the King makes him his representative here, with the restitution of his father's title and honours, and an establishment answerable to all these dignities."

This part of the information, Ignatius addressed to ears that heard him not. The word *father!* that sacred idea, which had so long filled the heart and the hopes of Louis, which had seemed the goal whither all his ambitions and his duties pointed; this holy image had sealed up his sense, only to dwell upon the idea of his expected presence. With the announcement of his near approach,

Louis thought of nothing else; and covering his face with his hands, the tears of filial love, — of filial triumph, — of gratitude to heaven, that he should at last behold that honoured countenance, poured from his eyes, and bathed his hands. Ignatius gazed on him, — gazed on his heaving, — his sobbing breast. A tear of sympathy, started into even his Stoic eye, as he turned away, and walked in silence down the room.

It was some minutes before Louis could recall himself from the inward temple of his soul, where his grateful heart had prostrated him before the Giver of all Good. When he looked up, he saw the *Sieur* at a distance, with his back to him, and leaning near the window which looked towards the Danube. Louis approached him; — “your goodness,” said he, “has pardoned a son, shewing some natural emotion at so sudden an intimation of soon seeing the

most honoured, the most beloved of parents?"

"Such sins are easily forgiven," returned Ignatius, with downward eyelids. "To-morrow, at this hour, your father will be at the *Palais d'Espagne*; the residence, under the late dynasty, of the Spanish ambassador at Vienna. You must be there to greet him."

Louis's eyes answered in the affirmative, for his lips denied their office; and the Sieur proceeded in his further orders. He said, that circumstances rendered it necessary that he should meet the Duke; therefore, as time pressed, his pupil must perform all that was to be done at the palace; and go that night at ten o'clock to the Chancellor Sinzendorff, and deliver to him those three packets. Ignatius had laid several on the table before the entrance of Louis; which he only just now observed: there were other packets to be presented the same night to the Empress; "of whom," continued the

Sieur, "Sinzendorff will see the propriety of requesting an immediate audience, to give you the opportunity of announcing the instant approach of the Duke de Ripperda, as the Spanish ambassador; and, when you do it, Louis, you must intimate that the nomination of the Duke is meant as a peculiar mark of the Spanish King's friendship for their Cæsarean Majesties, in thus parting with a man to do them honour, whose presence is as dear to his heart, as invaluable to his interests."

"This will be a hard trial of my diplomatic skill," rejoined Louis, with a happy smile; "to speak of him only as an ambassador."

"You will not, however, shew yourself his son," replied the Sieur, "if you do not put that restraint upon your feelings. Whatever may be his years, he is yet but a puling boy, who is not master of his face, and the veins which colour it. Remember, it is a *man*, I have en-

gaged to present in you to the Duke of Ripperda; and that it is he, who exacts of you to name him this night in the Empress's *boudoir*, with as cool an aspect as if you were announcing the arrival of a perfect stranger."

"Ah, Sir!" exclaimed Louis, "who can name the Duke de Ripperda, with the cool utterance which they might give to almost any other man? Is he not loved every where, where known? And where he is only heard of, is he not universally honoured? And can a son name such a father without emotion? Oh, Sir, send some other messenger, if I am to act an impossibility!"

"Well," replied Ignatius, throwing back his lofty plumes, and drawing his hand over his brow, "do your best in this commission, as you have done in other circumstances of management, and I do not doubt that the father you are so proud of, will be satisfied with his son."

“ I will do my best,” cried Louis, seeing that the Sieur was moving to depart, “ and, oh, dearest Sir, tell my revered father how impatient I am to meet him — to kneel at his feet — to be clasped in his arms !” — The last words were hardly articulated, from his encreasing emotion, and as the crowding tears again started to his eyes, he dashed them off: — ere he drew his hand from before them, the Sieur had left the apartment, — and he saw him no more !

When the happy Louis found himself alone, he threw himself into a chair to indulge the luxury of his feelings, to bless the time-honoured name of his father ; to weep with mingled recollections over the long interval which had passed since his widowed arms had resigned him, a babe, to the tears of his grandfather, now numbered with the dust. He thought of that good old man's tender care. Of the paternal guardianship of his uncle of Lindisfarne, of his benedic-

tion when they parted, and the sacred letter which he put into his hand, as the last legacy of his dying mother. In that, she spoke to her only son, as from her seat in Heaven, exhorting him to love and honour his father, as the object in his heart nearest to his God! The letter, Louis soon drew from the case in which he preserved it; and pressing it to his lips, on his knees, as he would have done her sacred hand, he there uttered the fullness of his heart in vows to obey her behest; and to love that father, on whom his conscious eyes had never rested, with, indeed, a double portion of his spirit, for the sake of that father's own noble nature; and for her's, who had resigned her life, in giving him to existence.

These reflections diffused a holy stillness over the happiness which now occupied the heart of Louis. And as the time approached for the fulfilment of his duty at the palace, he collected the royal packets; and putting them in his

bosom, wrapped himself in his cloak; and, as the clock struck ten, he entered the carriage with a blissful serenity over his mind, that seemed to breathe of paradise.

CHAP. IX.

LOUIS delivered the letters of Ignatius to the Chancellor; and in as few words, and with as much composure as he could command, he announced the near approach of the Spanish ambassador. Sincendorff fixed his observing glance on the fluttering lip that proclaimed the honoured name, and his doubts were confirmed. He read the letters, and then remarked, that his Imperial master would be particularly gratified by the promptitude of this arrival. The intended ambassador must have been sent forward, to be in readiness, for the proper moment of his official appearance; and this preparation fully proved the King of Spain's honourable dependence on the fair dealing of the cabinet of Austria.

Again he fixed his eyes on the face of his self-restrained auditor; and after expressing himself in terms of high respect with regard to the Duke de Ripperda, and applauding the decisive step he had taken, in accepting the embassy, he became fully satisfied that it was the son of the Duke he saw before him. The Chancellor smiled within himself at his own discovery, and at the attempted concealment by the Empress; but without observing on either, he addressed Louis still as the secretary de Phaffenberg, and proposed their going immediately to the Altheim apartments.

“ We shall certainly find Her Majesty there; ” said he, “ for the Emperor passes some hours to-night with his confessor, and the Empress told me she meant to enjoy the time in confidential discourse with Countess Otteline.

Louis followed the statesman to the Imperial *boudoir*; and, as he expected, there he found the gracious Elizabeth

and her beautiful favourite in close conference. He announced that the Chevalier was in the anti-room, with a commission from the Sieur Ignatius.

“Something extraordinary, by the hour!” cried the Empress, “but I trust no evil report. I am ready to see him.”

Louis entered. He did not look on the side where the Countess stood, but approaching his father’s illustrious friends with a steadiness of step that surprized himself; and with less visible emotion than he could have hoped, he delivered to her the message from Ignatius; adding, that the Sieur would have had the honour of declaring it in person, had he not been obliged to pass the night in necessary preliminaries to joining the Ambassador, in the morning, at St. Polten. In the evening, he would enter with him into Vienna.

The Empress’s bright eyes shot a radiant glance on the modest bend of the young secretary’s head, as he con-

cluded; and suddenly clasping the Countess in her arms, she exclaimed, — “ *Ave Maria!* This is the crown of the Incas!” The Countess did not comprehend the fulness of her meaning; neither did Louis quite understand it. Sinzendorff thought, that if disappointment had rendered Issabella rash in her threats, success seemed to have a similar effect on Elizabeth, by inflating her with hopes not less alarming. He believed he read in this extraordinary exclamation, that she anticipated a no small share in the wealth of the new world, by her influence over the promised Ambassador; and that she would make the marriage settlement for her daughter, an abundant dowry for herself. Whatever were her thoughts, her face was refulgent with animation; and receiving the packets of Ignatius from the hand of Louis with one of her most gracious smiles, she commanded him to take what entertainment the Countess Al-

them would afford him, while she should retire with the Chancellor, to examine the papers in her hand.

Louis bowed in obedience, and the Empress and her counsellor withdrew: she smiled to herself, as she closed the door on this auspicious hour for the lovers; for such, she determined it should be. She had herself fanned the admiration of the young secretary into the flame which she now saw kindling on his cheek, as with downward eyes, he saw himself on the point of being left alone with its object! From the first hour of his beholding her, until this present moment, the Empress had condescended to be the adviser and the confident of her beautiful friend. She loved her too sincerely, not to assist in effecting so illustrious a means, as a marriage with the son of Ripperda, of reinstating her in the rank she had lost by her widowhood. But with all this zeal in her cause, the Imperial Elizabeth did not betray the

secret of Ripperda; she merely hinted to the ambitious Otteline, that the Chevalier de Phaffenberg was other than he seemed, and, did she marry him, would place her at the height of her desires. "But," added she, "there may exist powers to counteract the wishes only, of the truest lover: you must therefore, lose no opportunity of binding his honour."

With these views, she regretted the week at the Luxemburg, which had necessarily separated the favourite from the object of her present aim. But when he appeared at the palace with his important tidings, the Empress gave way to every glad anticipation; and hoping all things from his unsuspecting and ardent nature, she seized the first opportunity of leaving him with the Countess; hardly doubting, that under the present heart-opening circumstances, he would reveal every secret of his rank, his name, and future plans, to make her his for ever.

Louis no sooner found himself alone

with the resistless Otteline, than his throbbing pulse reminded him that his guardian's exhortation was in danger. In spite of himself, his eyes had stolen a glance towards her, as the Empress withdrew; and her personal charms seemed to break upon him, that night, in fuller lustre, even than before, when he thought that nothing could have increased the perfection of her beauty. Their former meetings were always in a morning, when the dress is more enveloped, and consequently less of the figure is displayed. This was the first time he had seen her at a later hour, and she was habited as she had left the Imperial drawing-room. Her dress was white, and her fair arms and snowy bosom, decorated with jewels, drew the eye to forms that might drive the sculptors of Greece to despair. Her golden tresses were coiled with the same gorgeous bands; while one glittering ringlet, escaped from its confinement, waved

over her spotless neck, as if it were the wing of love fluttering towards the guarded regions of her heart. She caught the glance, and the almost smothered sigh, with which Louis affected to turn his attention towards a cage of birds which stood near him.

She did not appear to observe his embarrassment, but gently echoing the sigh, remained leaning against the pedestal of a vase of flowers, with her eyes fixed on the profile of his face. She guessed, that he saw nothing in the gilded cage, but her image in his mind. Again she sighed; and with such an expression, that Louis felt it thrill through his frame. He turned his head, and their eyes met. Her's were full of entrancing softness; his, of a grateful passion, which he would fain have rendered less distinct. She smiled tenderly, and stretched her arm towards him. In that moment he remembered how they had separated: he was again in the same position, at her

side, her hand in his, and clasped to his lips! The brilliant roses on her cheeks did not lose their brightness, in this speechless, but eloquent avowal of his love. But the Empress had told her to require *words!*

Her fair fingers trembled in his, when she falteringly articulated — “Chevalier! you have been so long absent — I thought —” She paused, and looked down.

“Not,” exclaimed he, “that I had forgotten to be grateful?”

She slowly raised her eyes towards his; and while the softest tears swam over her own, and gemmed a dimpled smile; she half whispered, — “the heart is a coward!”

“Never your’s!” cried he, forgetting his determined self-restraint, in the bewitching mazes of her thousand beauties, in the resistless fascination of her words and looks. With a burning blush, she sunk into a chair, but still yielding her hand to his fervent pressure, she suf-

ferred him to drop upon one knee by her side.

“Never can you doubt,” cried he, “where you have once confided.”

She averted her head, and shook it mournfully. A tear fell on his hand. Louis's soul was on his lips, as he kissed away that tear. The Countess covered her face, and almost sobbed. He had now no remembrance of any thing but herself. She was agitated, even distressed; and he was the cause! He attempted to speak, but emotion prevented his utterance; he trembled, and grasped her hand; she felt the strong pulsation of his heart against her knee, and softly murmured, — “This Ambassador arrives — and you will go!” She interrupted herself, and attempting to rise, exclaimed in disorder, “Oh, that I had never listened to our last conference!”

Louis detained her on her seat. He must have been dull as the iron rock,

and hard as its material, had he hesitated to understand and to reply to this agitation, this language. But words were inadequate to express the sympathy which seemed to dissolve all his faculties in the one feeling of unutterable love. He could only kneel at her feet, and clasp the hand he had detained, to his throbbing eyes.

Her exulting heart believed itself now near the goal of all its winding movements: a positive declaration of his love, and an unequivocal solicitation of her hand, in veritable words! Another step, and this bond of honour would be her's. But she did not permit the triumph of her thoughts to rise upon the managed scene of her countenance; all there was retreating softness: yet, allowing her arm to drop, as if unconsciously on his shoulder, with the sweet familiarity of perfect confidence, she gently said, "and may I believe that you love me well enough, to make me your's, in spite of

the world's harsh prejudice against a birth that was not noble? Can you be determined to bear me up against that world? For she who is the favourite of the Empress has many enemies; and when she is known to be beloved by you, she will have many more. — Ah, Chevalier, against all this, may I believe that you will be true?"

This demand, though put with all the force of exquisite tenderness, giving itself without reserve to the fidelity of implied attachment, contained words that recalled Louis from the delirium of passion, and made him ask himself, how *true* he had kept his engagement with Ignatius? How *true* he had maintained his *determination* to preserve his duty to his father? since he was even now on the point of dishonouring both, by uttering the very vow against which he had been so solemnly enjoined!

Shocked at the oblivion in which all memory of his duty had lain for the last

half-hour, and indignant with himself, that his consequent discovery of a more than reciprocal passion, had betrayed the Countess to the last decisive question, he started from his knees, and said in a hurried voice, “ I dare not answer you as my heart would dictate, most lovely, most beloved of women! — I am not my own. — In pity then — in honour — allow my lips to be silent for a time.”

She hastily rose from her chair. — “ I do not understand you, Chevalier!”

He thought he had wounded her delicacy and her love, and with increased agitation, he exclaimed, “ Despise my weakness, my apparent indecision, but do not doubt my heart! do not doubt the honour, that would sooner immolate that heart’s dearest wishes, than make them all its own by a breach of positive duty.”

What was now passing in her mind, he could only guess, by the quick heaving of her bosom; for she covered her

face with one hand, while she attempted to shake off the fond grasp with which he clung to the other.

“ You do doubt me ? ” cried he.

“ You are mysterious ; and I have no alternative.”

“ Oh,” repeated he, “ does the friend of the Empress Elizabeth, the confident of statesmen ! does she doubt the honour of mystery ? ”

The Countess smiled, and no longer struggling to release her hand, turned on him a look of perfect re-assurance. But what she would have said, the enchanted heart of Louis could only translate by its own vivid imaginations ; for the door of the interior apartment opened, and the Empress and her counsellor re-appeared.

The Countess, in a beautiful disorder of smiles and blushes, moved forward to meet Her Majesty ; and Louis, bowing to her advancing step, remained where his Circe had left him. The Empress

entered, as she had departed, full of animation; and without appearing to observe that any thing particular had passed between her favourite and the young secretary, she proceeded to speak of the letters she had just been reading; one from the Queen of Spain, and the other from Ripperda himself. She turned to Louis with a peculiar smile; “Chevalier,” said she, “I must be your patroness with this great man. If you have any suit to proffer, trust it with me.”

Louis coloured deeper than the scarlet on her robe; but did not trust his eyes towards the Countess. The Empress resumed the discourse to Sinzendorff; narrating her first acquaintance with Ripperda, when he came a widower to her father's court, on a mission from the States General. She expatiated on the amplitude of his character; adding, that it was a sure proof of the King of Spain's own talents, that he knew so well how

to distinguish, and to appropriate the genius of such a man as the Duke de Ripperda.

For the first time in his life, Louis heard the praises of his father, as the whirring of an indistinct sound. Absorbed by the new emotions which laboured in his heart, he had no eyes but for the tremulous form, no ears but for the low quick sighs of his enrapturing Otteline. He had no thoughts but of wonder, how he could ever have paused for a moment in believing her, all perfect in mind, as well as in body; in feeling her, all sweet devoted love, as she was all resistless loveliness. "Ah," said he to himself, "Ignatius might see her unmoved; but my father, who has loved excellence in woman's form, has only to see her, to bless the happy destiny of his son!"

The Empress, by a side glance, read his soul in his eyes, and stealing a pressure of congratulation on the arm of

the Countess ; with apparent unconcern, turned to Sinzendorff, and exclaimed : “ but, Chancellor, before we part for the night, I must not forget to mention what might have been a notable discovery, had not this happy promptitude in Ripperda’s arrival put all beyond the power of manœuvre. Otteline, shew the Chancellor the letter.”

The Countess took an open letter from a locked casket on the table, and put it into his hand.

“ Read it aloud, for general benefit,” said the Empress, “ there is nothing more improving to politicians, than the *faux pas* of a rival.”

The Chancellor looked towards the door.

“ Shoot the bolt, Chevalier de Phaffenberg,” cried the Empress, “ His Excellency seems to suspect treachery in the vestibule.”

Louis obeyed, and returning to the side of Sinzendorff, as the pointing hand

of Her Majesty commanded, His Excellency began to read. The superscription was to Madame la Comtesse Altenstein, and the contents as follows:—

“ Apprise the fair head of so many faithful members, that the power which threatens our existence is now so gorged with its various prey, as to have fallen asleep. It dreams of empire; and talks its secrets to a darkness full of eyes, and in a solitude of more observation than the ear of Dionysius. To night, I will bring a good account of *one at least*, of its mining emissaries; while a sure train is laid under the feet of *the rest*.”

When the Chancellor ceased reading, and was examining the hand-writing, Louis thought of the caution he had received the preceding evening. Dreading a similar attack might way-lay Ignatius next morning in his journey to meet the ambassador, (when the faithful Jesuit would be attended by no

stronger guard than the unweaponed arm of Martini,) his anxious pupil, full of alarm, abruptly asked the date of the letter.

“ Yesterday morning,” replied Sinzen-dorff, folding up the paper, “ and since we cannot count the loss of any of our members, we must conclude this doughty champion, whoever he may be, has failed in his pledge to the lady to whom he has devoted his sword.”

“ Or rather his dagger!” replied the Empress, “ we have found they do not challenge with fairer weapons. But now, let us vote thanks to the vigilant hand that intercepted this bungling piece of treason; and pass to a pleasanter subject. My Otteline found the fairy favour!”

“ And by what kind dispensation?” enquired the Chancellor, as with a bow of acquiescence to the Empress, he returned the letter to her friend.

“ While I was at the Luxemburg, a

whole bundle of letters collected themselves in this drawer," replied the Countess, putting her hand upon a part of the table, in which was an aperture to receive and to hold in safety all that might arrive during her absence; "and only returning to-day, I had not time to examine my correspondence till about an hour or two ago, while I was waiting for the Empress. In turning them over, I saw this directed, as you see, to the Electress's Lady of the Key. I know that she is the repository of her mistress's secrets; and it was possible this letter might contain some of them. I thought the hand-writing was that of the envious Count Stalhberg. Accident had conducted it to me," added the beautiful Otteline with an exulting smile; "and I would not throw away my fortune:— I broke the seal."

At the last sentence, Louis sprang back from the spot on which he stood, as if he had trod on a serpent. The re-

sounding of the floor under his recoiling feet, turned all eyes upon him.

“ Monsieur Phaffenberg !” cried the Chancellor, in a voice of reproof ; “ you forget in whose presence you are ?”

Louis put his hand to his forehead, as he strove to recover his appalled senses. He turned to the Empress : “ I have no words in which to beg Your Majesty’s forgiveness for this ! But such irritability shall never offend again !”

“ You are ill then ?” enquired Elizabeth, with more graciousness than accorded with the brow of the Chancellor.

“ I was,” replied Louis, smiling ghastly, “ but I am perfectly well now. And if His Excellency can pardon the interruption, I beg he will proceed.”

The statesman’s frowns had not been those of displeasure at the young secretary’s revulsionary indecorum. He had seen enough between the Empress and her favourite, to convince him that, whoever that young man was, they intended

he should be the duped successor of the late infatuated Count Altheim. All knew that the Countess's object was to intrude herself again into the society, which had rejected her as an usurper, because she had conducted herself like a tyrant; and that her only means were by another illustrious marriage. Sinzendorff cherished an Austrian's pride against the pretensions of the ignoble Otteline; whom he knew to be as little elevated in mind, as in birth; though she had ambition enough to overtop the crown of her mistress. He felt resentment against the Empress, for such pertinacity in thrusting her haughty favourite into the ranks of Austrian nobility; he despised the favourite herself; and fully comprehending the recent extraordinary action and words of her meditated victim, he determined to let him see a little deeper into the character of his scheming mistress. When Louis hastily uttered his apology, Sinzendorff bowed; and receiving a nod from the Empress, to proceed in his remarks, he turned to

the Countess ; whose investigating eyes were fixed on the suddenly pale and averted face of her lover.

“ And so Madam,” resumed the Chancellor, with a slight smile and bend of his head ; “ you made the *Lady of the Key* relinquish her trust, *vi et armis* ? ”

“ I did,” replied the favourite, recalling herself with an air of dignity ; “ and, finding what you have just read, I saw that mischief had been intended, and might be again devised against some of the Empress’s agents ; and when Her Majesty honoured me with her presence this evening, I ventured to suggest to her the expediency of shewing the paper to you.”

“ You have done warily, Madam ! ” replied Sinzendorff.

“ Admirably ! ” exclaimed the Empress. “ It is always wisdom to learn what have been the intentions of an enemy, even after he has lost the battle.”

Elizabeth concluded with an observation on the promptitude of affection ;

“ It acts, while mere prudence only decides.”

“ I am happy to meet Your Majesty's, and His Excellency's approbation ;” returned the Countess, glancing by a side-long look at the abstracted countenance of her lover. — “ They add an incontrovertible sanction to my principle, that real love is a dictating sentiment, whence there is no appeal. It is omnipotent, or it is nothing. My Sovereign and my husband (the last word was uttered tremulously) should be alike the arbiters of my actions, and of my life !”

“ And of your honour, too, Madam !” said the Chancellor, with a biting smile.

Astonished at the manner of this question, and jealous of any implied censure before the man to whom all her attractions were then directed ; for a moment she suffered the blaze of anger to escape her eyes : Louis caught the flash in its passage to the statesman, and, like a blighting lightning, it shot into his soul.

Drawing herself up with an air of proud resentment: — “ My honour, Sir,” said she, “ is consecrated to my friends; and ill would it serve them, could it be made the slave of their enemies. Besides,” added she, with a scornful smile; stratagems are as notoriously fair in the cabinet as in the field!”

“ Were we not, all, sooner or later, of your creed, Madam;” returned the Chancellor, with a bow, “ we should make sorry figures in either contest! and therefore you will pardon an old practitioner, putting a young disciple a little on the defensive? But while we approve this dexterous act of diplomacy; to prevent awkward consequences from enquiries about detention, &c. we must consider how to dispose of the letter!”

“ Give it me, my honest Chancellor,” said the Empress, taking it from his hand, and not very well pleased with his manner to her favourite; “ dead men tell no tales!” and with the words, she lighted the letter at a candle, and threw the flam-

ing embers into the fender of an incense stove that stood near.

Louis listened, and gazed, and wondered. Listened and gazed on the woman so lately transcendantly lovely in his eyes; wondered, that her voice had ever sounded sweetly in his ear; that her face could ever have appeared otherwise than harsh and repelling!—Appalled at what he now witnessed from her, and from them all three; and at the idea of how he might, a few minutes before, have pledged his faith, beyond recall, to one of such abhorrent principles; he inwardly blessed the caution of Ignatius:—and, as he continued for some time to stand more like an automaton than a living being; he heard no more of the conversation, till the Empress dismissed the council; and whispered to him at parting—“To-morrow, your rank will be declared; so, for the last time, adieu Chevalier de Phaffenberg!”

Louis put her hand mechanically to his lips, and withdrew, without casting another glance at his so lately worshipped

Otteline. Sinzendorff was satisfied with what he had done towards opening the eyes of this ingenuous young man ; and, without committing himself by making a remark on what had passed, he wished him a good night at the door of the gallery.

Louis ran through the other passages ; as if, by the swiftness of motion, he could fly the thoughts which clung like harpies to his heart. The palace clock struck one ; and the extinguishers of the lights which illumined the avenues to the various apartments, were appearing in every direction, and rapidly involving the whole in the sombre hue that suits the hour of rest. He passed through the grand quadrangle to the portal, at which he had ordered his carriage to be in waiting. At the moment he put out his hand to open its door, he was seized in the strong grasp of some person. He could not see by what sort of a man, the night being profoundly dark, and the lamps over the great gates

too distant to cast more than a gleam, sufficient to shew where the carriage stood. Before he could make even an attempt for extrication, the person whispered in his ear, — “On your life, do not return to the Chateau to-night. It’s porch is filled with your father’s enemies.”

Ere Louis could reply, his arms were released, and he was alone. But it was the faithful heart of Wharton which had beat against his; it was his well-known accents which had announced this second warning! Louis looked around, and listened. — He could see nothing but his dingy vehicle; hear nothing, but the champing of his horses’ bits, as they impatiently awaited his arrival.

“Coachman,” said he, as he threw himself into the carriage; “drive to the Vien, and there I will give you further orders.”

The fatal letter, that dissolved the bright vision of love which a few hours before revelled in his breast, had proved

the stability of friendship; for it corroborated the timely caution of Wharton's warning epistle: and therefore Louis could not doubt, (had it been possible for him to doubt any thing from Wharton,) the veracity of his present information. Before he cast a second thought on the use he ought to make of it, he could not refrain from comparing the steady disinterestedness of his much calumniated friend, with what they who disesteemed him would have foretold of his conduct in such circumstances.

“Yes,” cried he, “generous Wharton! in spite of all, thou wilt fasten my soul to thee; for all thy links are honourable! Oh, what had I to do with love? with women's smiles and sorceries? Why should I give up my soul to lie in the lap of effeminate sensibilities, when I had such a friend as this, to occupy my whole heart with noble sympathies? with manly aspirations? with devotion to virtue alone? I detest myself for my

weakness; for my entrapped vanity! For though I saw her beautiful, and thought her charming; though I was astonished at such marvellous beauty, yet it never touched my heart, till she smiled upon me, — and looked. — I will not think how she looked,” cried he, striking his forehead, “else the devil that she conjured within me, will undo me again! Oh, woman! syren woman! from the first thou wert a tempter — a creature to try the virtue of man — to make him feel his bonds to earth! — while friendship, divine union of soul to soul, asserts to his immortal spirit, its derivation from heaven!”

Louis was wrapped in these reflections when the coachman stopped, and demanded further orders.

“I will get out here,” replied he, “and you may go to the College stables.”

When the man obeyed, and Louis found himself alone in the street, he knew it was not far from one of the gates

which led to the suburbs. Notwithstanding the danger which menaced his approaching the Chateau, not to return to it to-night, was what he could not reconcile to his sense of the trust reposed in him. It would be abandoning its repository of state secrets to the depredators; should they, on missing him this second time, resolve on entering the house itself. Its situation was perfectly lonesome; and he could not suppose that persons, so well informed of his movements, could be ignorant that it contained no other domestics than Gerard, and, lately, his wife. To leave it to these unwary guardians, when danger was so near, he believed would be as distinct a desertion of his duty, as to deliver every paper it contained, into the hands of his father's enemies. On these grounds, he thought it right to proceed immediately to the Chateau; but not by a path likely to be invested by the persons planted to way-lay him.

When through the gate, he considered a minute which would be the securest circuit ; and then determined on a sweep by the river, to the back of the mansion. By this means, he thought he should unite all that prudence could demand, with his resolution not to allow the assailants any advantage from an undue care of himself. The way through the hinder premises of the desolate street of St. Xavier, was intricate and bewildering. The place having been destroyed by a ravaging fire, was totally deserted ; and Louis trod the devious alleys without meeting a living soul of whom he could ask a direction to the water-side. The absolute silence assured him of safety so far ; and he continued to grope his way over the mouldering piles.

When he emerged into the open part of the suburbs, the feeble light of the stars, being no longer traversed by the deep shadows of close buildings, afforded him sufficient guidance. The waters of

the Danube glimmered at some distance on his right ; while the murky line which clouded his view to the left, informed him he was within sight of the avenue which led direct to the ambush he must avoid. He kept on towards the river ; and, having reached its banks, turned along the margin to the path that led to the Chateau. After half an hour's walk, he entered on the woodland, which declined from the garden-wall to the Danube ; and when he arrived at the wall itself, he found it a rampart of stupendous height, and quite perpendicular. But he who had climbed the beetling rocks of Northumberland, and gazed around from their eagle summits with the careless eye of security, had no difficulty in surmounting a few feet more or less of any structure raised by man. The old crumbling stones made a breach wherever he placed his ascending foot ; but he soon gained the top ; and jumping down into the garden, (for on that side the wall was merely

a parapet), ran swiftly through the grass-grown walks to the terrace before the house.

He found the door open. He entered; but closing it after him, pushed the strong bolts into their guard; and then felt his way through the midnight darkness of the passages to the kitchen, where he expected to find Gerard on the watch for his return. The honest German was asleep in a huge wooden chair, by the side of a large half-burnt log, now extinguished; and a lamp, almost reduced to its last drop of oil, flickered on the table, near an unlighted candle and a flambeau.

Louis lighted the candle; and hesitated a moment, whether he should awaken Gerard to accompany him to the examination it was proper to make, or leave him quiet, till he had seen whether the ambuscade were still in the porch. Thinking it most prudent to go alone, he took the candle and proceeded

to the hall, where he left his light in an obscure corner, and then without noise opened the great door. With his pistol in his hand, he crossed the court-yard, and drew near the gates; but the wood of which they were constructed being very deep and studded with iron, he listened in vain for a sound from the other side. Judging that it was their thickness which prevented his hearing some sign of the intended assailants, and wishing to assure Ignatius that he had obtained sensible proof of the veracity of this second warning, he determined to seek further.

He felt his way up the rough stonework of the piers of the arch, and clambering over it, planted himself behind the great stone scutcheon of the Phaffenberg arms, which crested its architrave. He strained his eyes downwards, but could perceive nothing through the double night of a moonless sky, and the obscuring umbrage of the trees. He

thought he heard a low murmur, as of whispering voices beneath ; but he could not be sure that it was not the wind in the branches. He leaned over to make closer observation, and had nearly been precipitated into the midst of his enemies ; for a part of the ancient stonework gave way, and fell with a clattering noise upon the pavement in front of the porch. Louis had caught by the iron supports of what remained, and so was saved from too well informing himself of who were below.

The effects of the accident gave him immediate notice of what he had escaped. Some of the heavy fragments had fallen upon one of the eves-droppers, whose consequent curses were instant and loud. Other voices of like import, with wonder how it had happened, were mingled with commands from one person for caution and silence. Louis wanted no more to satisfy him, that but for the generous zeal of Wharton, he might now himself

have been lying a wounded wretch under the daggers of these men. The ruffian who had been knocked down by the fall of the escutcheon, seemed to be much hurt ; for as his companions attempted to raise him, Louis could distinctly hear him utter the most direful imprecations against the Sieur Ignatius and the devils in league with him. The former commanding voice replied in a more conciliatory tone, "Come, come Spitzberg, this is only a little artillery from the owls ! Don't mind a graze, man ; you shall pinion the gallant, in revenge for these bruises ; for I will wait here till sun-rise, rather than again be baffled by his lucky star."

"I'll pinion him with a witness ;" grumbled the fellow, "and make him confess his heart's blood !"

"Silence, then," reiterated his commander. The order was almost instantly obeyed ; and Louis thinking, after this injunction, he could learn no more, with

a similar caution to that he had observed in advancing, retreated over the gateway, and descended safely into the court.

Though he saw no symptoms of an attack on the house, he did not neglect to make the hall-door perfectly secure, before he took up his candle to return to the kitchen, and dismiss his vigilant attendant to rest. He found the lamp burnt out, and Gerard still fast asleep. A rousing shake of the shoulder, however soon made him start from his seat; and when his half-opened eyes perceived the object of his watchfulness standing by his side, he could hardly believe he was not dreaming yet. Louis bid him go to bed, and he would tell him in the morning how he had let himself in. Gerard gaped, and stretched his arms, glared at his young master, and said it was very odd! He had double-locked and bolted the gates. But his Honour was a scholar of the Sieur Ignatius; and so he would rather hear no more about it.

“ Well then, good night !” said Louis, with a smile ; “ and since you can explain the matter to your own satisfaction, it is sufficient for me. Only keep true to your professed practice, and be sure that all the doors and windows are locked and barred before you go to rest.”

“ I saw that before I fell asleep, Sir.”

“ Then who drew the bolts of the door on the terrace ?”

“ Nobody comes into the house that way,” replied Gerard, pouring oil into his lamp.

“ I did,” returned Louis.

The worthy German looked more astonished at this information, than he had seemed to be when he suspected the learned secretary had passed through the key-hole, by some of the occult arts of Ignatius ; who his wife had long persuaded her credulous husband to believe, was nothing short of a wicked necromancer.

Louis followed the sluggish steps of

his attendant to every door that opened from the house ; and being satisfied that all were safe, he bade Gerard good-night, who mumbled out the same, without casting a thought on the unusual caution of his master. Louis proceeded to the room which contained all the state-manuscripts that were yet under his care ; and feeling no sleep in his eyes, or in his wishes, he laid his pistols on the table, and prepared to watch and to meditate until morning.

CHAP. X.

WHEN morning broke, it found the wearied spirit of Louis fast reposing under his closed eye-lids. He had arraigned himself and his fair mistress before the bar of his reason, again and again. He fatigued memory in recalling every word he had ever heard her utter, to judge how her former sentiments agreed with her late unqualified declaration on the side of expediency ; and, to his consternation he found that he could recollect no one generous thought from her lips, which had not been the echo of some opinion from his own. She had never led the way in noble sentiment. How different was the case in his conversations with his now far distant Cornelia and Alice ! Sympathy reigned through-

out their circle, and it was only to speak first to have the good fortune to promulgate the thought of every breast.

What then, had the woman he regarded as Perfection's self, had she met only one compulsive occasion of declaring her unbiassed opinion on a subject of principle; and had she proved herself divested of any? Devoted alone to the dominancy of passion, whether it point to the right or to the wrong? To him, who had been brought up at the feet of the christian instructor of Lindisfarne, it was no excuse that devotedness to love, or zeal in friendship, were her motives for abandoning the rule of human conduct. They were the hills of paradise, on which man might repose his grateful heart, but there was a heaven above them; and when its flaming sword passed between him and his earthly Eden, Louis believed there should be obedience without appeal.

“ Oh !” cried he, writhing under the

recollections of the last scene at the palace, "had I known too late, that such thou art, how should I have withered in those arms?" Louis felt that he would rather be clasped at once in the icy embrace of death, than take to his bosom the most beautiful form in nature that was cold to the soul of his soul, an immortalizing aspiration after virtue and the approbation of his creator.

"Oh, Otteline," exclaimed he, "a gulph that is impassable, now divides us!"

As these reflections gradually subsided into sleep, her image kept its station in his dreams; but it was not as heretofore, when his visionary fancy used to pourtray her smiling in groves of perpetual spring:—She now appeared in rugged scenes of affright, accusing him of faithlessness; and with menacing gestures stimulating unseen personages to revenge.

He did not awake till the sun had risen

far above the horizon ; and then he found himself stretched on the floor, with his head pillowed on his arm. The cheerfulness of the busy morning hour shone on all without ; while within, the desolation of loneliness and of discomfort, sat, like a troubled spirit, on every gloomy piece of furniture.

“ But this is the day, the blissful day,” cried he, “ when the bewildering spell which has so long enwrapped me, will be broken ! I shall again mingle in the social meetings of my fellow-creatures ; and find myself amongst a variety of persons, to whom I can speak, and rationally companion my mind and my enjoyments. — Hitherto, for these three months past, I have gone gliding about, fearful of human glance, or friendly cognizance, till my crazed faculties fancied a guardian-angel in a beauteous vapour ! But now, the mists disperse. Propitious morning, bright and transparent, I greet your opening ! — You will unfold to me my fa-

ther! you will release me from the wild and feverish dream in which my life has wasted, ever since this dreary mansion became the confidant of my thoughts!"

In contemplating such a happy consummation of his most sacred wishes, he passed to his own apartment; where, redressing himself, with all his wonted elasticity of spirits, he prepared for the coming events of the day. On entering the saloon, he found Gerard placing the breakfast tray. The man told him that Martini was below, with a message from the Sieur.

"Send him to me," returned Louis, anxious to hear of Ignatius's safe arrival at Saint Polten's; and eager to be told any thing that might relate to his father's approach.

Martini obeyed the summons with alacrity. His appearance was full of gaiety, and his dress, (which he took pains to display, under a large Hungarian great coat,) was of a splendor that instantly attracted

the notice of Louis, as much from its novelty as its costliness. The Italian's former habit, was a russet grey, without ornament or smartness; but this was scarlet, and gorgeously laced with gold.

“Why Martini!” cried Louis, “That is a gala dress!—and to honour the ambassador, I suppose!—you have left him well; and conducted your noble master safe?”

Martini was at that moment viewing his own figure, with peculiar complacency in one of the large mirrors of the apartment. Louis could have laughed, as he repeated his question to the happy coxcomb.

“I am impatient as yourself, Signor,” replied he, “to see the entrance of the Ambassador. You will then know that I do not wear this livery without a right!”

“I did not suspect it, my good Martini,” returned Louis, “but you do not tell me when His Excellency is to arrive?”

“ By five in the evening, at the *Palais d' Espagne* ; and thither I am to conduct you to await him.”

“ In a habit as splendid as your own?” asked Louis, with a smiling nod to his laced vest. Martini coloured, and throwing a proud glance over his embroidery, exclaimed — “ Signor, I have been some years with my master ; and seniority of services, with some great men, has more consequence than short duties in higher posts.”

“ I wish it were the rule with all great men !” replied Louis, “ And be assured Martini, I shall always have too much respect for your tried fidelity to your master, ever to wish to rival you in his good graces. But come, answer my twice-demanded question ; how did you leave him at Saint Polten?”

“ I did not leave him there at all,” replied Martini ; “ he left me last night ; and at parting, gave me a commission to

execute a million of orders, e're he should return."

"Then he went alone?" asked Louis, with an alarm he would not shew; "or what were his attendants?"

"He might, or he might not have some of the Ambassador's people to meet him on the road; but on receiving a letter at midnight by Castanos, he called me to his chamber; and, after giving me his commands, went away, telling me I should see him no more till we met this evening in the *Palais d' Espagne*."

"And have you heard nothing of him?"

"Nothing."

"But Castanos accompanied him?"

"I do not know. The surly old Spaniard went out before my master; and would not answer me when I spoke to him."

Louis was disturbed at this vague information. The threatening language he had heard last night, and the unseason-

able hour of Ignatius's journey, filled him with apprehensions for the event. But, unobservant of the troubled countenance which only appeared to listen to him, the volatile Italian continued the conversation in rapturous descriptions of the *Palais d'Espagne*; its costly furniture; the splendid retinue which were placed there to welcome its future lord; and the magnificent entertainment that was preparing for his reception. "Ah," cried the transported valet, "who will see us there, and believe we could ever have endured, for so many months, the hard vigils of that horrid College!"

"And yet," said Louis, striving to recall his attention from his growing fears respecting the safety of Ignatius; "it seems to me that College seclusion, and even its austerities, are better calculated to please the taste of your master; than the public bustle, and scenes of luxury, you have just described."

"That may be, Signor!" replied

Martini, "but times change men, as men change the times; so, I make no more manifestoes for my master, than for myself."

"But I wish you had taken more care of him!" returned Louis, rising from his seat; "Indeed Martini, after his having been once assailed, you ought not to have allowed him to set out alone."

"Allowed him!" retorted the Italian, "allowed my master! He has never been *allowed* in his life! He has always done just as his will impells him: and, I know not the man on earth, who dare to say to him, *I withhold*, or *I allow!*"

"You mistake me. I did not mean to invest you with a lord's controul over the Sieur; but ought you not to have asked his permission to attend him? Ought you not to have entreated him, when you knew, by so recent an experience, that the assassin's poniard lies in wait for his life?"

"My master commands, and I obey,

Signor!" replied Martini, "that is the duty he requires of me, and he would banish me for presumption, should I proffer any other."

"He ought to be a god," returned Louis, "to live in such proud loneliness! But I am too much of a mortal, not to be anxious about his safety, and I request you to let me have the earliest intelligence respecting him."

Martini answered carelessly, "that as things were, it was impossible to learn any thing until the suite should arrive;" "but," added he, "I shall then have the happiness of conducting you to the *Palais d'Espagne*, where you will see him."

"Be punctual to your hour;" replied Louis, "for I shall impatiently await you."

Martini crossed himself, in ratification of his word, and with a step, light as his spirits, danced out of the apartment.

"Joy, the joy of the heart!" ejaculated Louis, as he looked after the jocund

Italian, "is not gay; it is soul-centered; and calls for meditation on its own perfection!"

Louis's imagination, kindled by the ardent affection he had ever cherished in his bosom for his father, was again called forth to set that image of his idolatry in a halo of the purest lustre. The name of parent seemed to consecrate the adoration of his heart. There could be no excess, he thought, in loving him from whom his being and his honour were derived; and, in the ardour of his enthusiasm, he beseeched the Almighty to bless him with a virtue worthy of such a father; and, that in every contest with his passions, he might conduct himself as became his ancestry on earth, and his nobler origin in heaven!

In hours like these, Louis learnt the full value of the pious offices to which the instructions of the Pastor of Lindisfarne had habituated his mind. The heavenly serenity which presided over

the heart of the venerable man, was the best proof of his precepts. "My son," he used to say, "whether you are agitated with joy, or with grief, let your first counsellor be the dispenser of both. His gracious spirit is ready to assuage the burning glances of the one, by the dewy incense of a grateful heart; and he will illuminate the shadows of the other, by the starry light of faith and hope."

Louis did not permit the contemplation of future high duties, to dull the recollection of present ones, however lowly, that were yet to be performed. He gathered the papers in his writing-room, and confided them to an obscure closet in a remote part of the Chateau; where, he believed, they would be secure from either curiosity or depredation, till he should be commissioned to transfer them to some other custody.

As the time drew nigh for the promised summons to the *Palais d'Espagne*, his

watch was drawn out again and again. But when minutes only intervened between his wishes and the eventful hour, he held it in his hand, and paced the room with a beating heart. He heard a step in the gallery. He flew to the door. It was Martini.

“Is he arrived?” cried Louis, rushing towards him.

“No,” replied the Italian. “But haste. I expect the cavalcade every moment, and your carriage is at the gate.”

Louis seemed to have made but one step from the hall to the carriage. He was seated in it, and leaning breathless against the back, with his hand over his face, when Martini jumped in by his side. The lively valet discoursed with his usual fluency, but what he said, his auditor did not know: he had no outward perception, all was absorbed within. The vehicle stopped; he thought the

horses must have flown, when Martini exclaimed, “ we are at the *Palais d'Espagne*. Signor you must alight.”

Louis aroused himself, and looked around. He was in the court-yard of a superb mansion, thronged with a crowd of liveried attendants walking to and fro under the colonades and portico. The spacious doors of the house stood open. Louis sprang from the carriage, and, without noticing the men who bowed as he passed, hurried through the great vestibule after Martini. The valet preceded him up the lofty stair-case to a range of gorgeous apartments. The first and second were full of Spanish merchants, resident at Vienna; eagerly awaiting the entrance of an Ambassador, who had obtained the restitution of all the privileges, which had been wrested from them when the Austrian family lost the crown of Spain. The next chamber was a saloon of Imperial magnificence.

“ Here, Signor,” said the Italian,

“you must attend the commands of the Duke de Ripperda.” And without another word, he bowed slightly, and hastened away.

Louis's feelings were wound up almost to torture, during the short interval between that moment, and the one in which his expecting ear caught the trampling of horses, and the buz of an approaching crowd. He rushed to the window, and beheld a train of travelling carriages filled with the suite of the embassy, sweeping by the great gates of the mansion, while the court-yard was filled by populace, and an immense cavalcade in splendid Spanish uniforms. Immediately following the latter, appeared six horses, richly caparisoned, and drawing a carriage surmounted with the ducal coronet. Louis saw no more. That carriage contained his father! He started from the window. The air resounded with shouts. He pressed his clasped hands on his bursting heart.

A few minutes more, and Martini darted into the outer-room that contained the merchants. The door was open; and Louis heard him say, "The Ambassador!" The next instant he beheld a man of such resplendent aspect — a step, a form, an air; a bowing dignity, as he bent his gracious head, waving with white plumes to the grateful Spaniards who thronged around him — that Louis felt at once, it was his Father! His feet were rivetted to the spot on which he stood; his eyes on that august figure; but it was with the dazzled gaze of eager, expecting joy.

The crowd separated from before their benefactor, and he entered the saloon. As he advanced into the room, the door was closed behind him, and while the unshorn star of prosperity seemed fixed in his magnificent countenance, he made a hasty step forward, and extended his arms to his son.

With a cry of joy, in which nothing

was articulate but — “ My Father ! ” Louis precipitated himself towards him, and fell upon his breast. The Duke strained him to his bosom ; but that overwrought heart had ceased to beat ; and, with a moistened cheek, he pressed the insensible lips of his too happy son.

CHAP. XI.

LOUIS re-opened his eyes on a superb couch, in a magnificent bed-chamber, and surrounded by the physicians who had accompanied the suite of his father from Madrid. A few minutes more restored him the possession of all his faculties; and looking around, he did not seek in vain for the noble form, whose parental embrace was yet warm on his heart. Seeing that his son was recovered, the Duke made a sign for every person to leave the room. Louis was going to rise, but his father checked him by a motion of his hand; and drawing near him, sat down by his side.

They were now alone. The Duke had taken his hand. — Louis kissed it reverentially. “ Ah, my father !” cried

he, "if words could utter all that is in my soul, towards your honoured self! Revered for your own sake, — sacred for that of my angelic mother!" Tears bathed the hand, which he sealed again with a son's devoted lips.

"Louis," said the Duke. Louis started, and looked around, and then turned to his father. Ripperda silently regarded the enquiring movements of his son.

"Sir," said Louis, "did I not hear the *Sieur Ignatius* speak to me?"

"You heard the voice of your father," returned the Duke, and he smiled. It was the smile which Louis had never beheld on other mouth but one! He gazed on his father's face with searching amazement. Ripperda still wore his plumed hat. He took it off, to submit himself the more completely to the inspection of his son. Louis felt that the voice and smile were those of the dark-visaged and reserved *Ignatius*; but the

face, on which he now looked, was refulgent with manly beauty, and the undisguised consciousness of high desert. Though the resemblance was so extraordinary in two respects, yet, as in every other point the dissimilarity was as striking, Louis had no suspicion of the truth; and concluding that the Jesuit was some illustrious Spanish branch of the Ripperda family, he earnestly replied, — “but where is the Sieur? Your voice, my father, is so exactly his, I guess I must revere him as a near relation, as well as your steadfast friend! But where is he? For many reasons, I am anxious to know that he is safe.”

“He is safe,” returned the Duke, “and it gives me no small satisfaction that you have been obliged to ask that question of me.”

“Oh, Sir,” replied his son, “though I might not always conduct myself in the manner the Sieur Ignatius would approve; yet, I had hoped you could not

doubt that I would eventually give him all my reverence."

"I did not refer to that," resumed the Duke, "but, as you had suspicions respecting the real situation and authority of that man; and did not misconceive the character of your father; when, through all the long months in which you obeyed commands that would not suffer an appeal; and you so often doubted that the Baron de Ripperda could really submit his son to such uncontrollable delegated power; how did it happen, that you never suspected the mysterious Ignatius, and your father to be one and the same person?"

"How?" exclaimed Louis, hardly conscious that he had spoken, while, in hesitating astonishment his eye hastily scanned the august form before him. It was indeed like that of Ignatius, majestic in every proportion, but with more meridian vigour, with a more gracious

air of command. No trace of age discomposed the lofty symmetry of his figure; no mark of time was visible on his capacious brow; cleared from the darkening dye with which he had stained his complexion and his hair, his eyes shone bright as the heavens, which their hue resembled. On the side of his forehead, under the hair, Louis could discern the scar which had been inflicted under the portico of the Jesuits' College. He shuddered at what might have been the issue of that stroke; and thought what would have been his agony, had he known that it was his father's hand which closed so deathfully upon his, in the dark chamber of murder. He could not speak, but his eyes and quivering lip, told all that was passing in his mind.

“It was necessary,” resumed the Duke, “that the negotiation with Austria should be managed with dispatch and secrecy. The Queen proposed that I should undertake it in dis-

guise. I left Madrid under an ostensible rumour, that I was gone to Russia on an affair connected with the Baltic trade. At the place of usual embarkation, I dismissed all my attendants, excepting Castanos and Martini. They were essential to my proceedings. In the same day, I assumed the habit of a Jesuit; and with my credentials disposed about my person, made my way to Vienna. Besides the persons I have named, the Empress Elizabeth alone was privy to my disguise. Her confidence in me inspired the idea of the negociation; and her own interest in some of its articles warranted my faith in her secrecy; — our success, you know. But while I was effecting these great objects for my country, I chose the opportunity to give my son his first lesson in the science to which fate has destined him. Louis, I am fully satisfied with all you then performed. But you have yet much to learn, and more to practise. You are now to be plunged

into the world, to stem the eddies of two contending vortices, duty and pleasure! Mark me, and write on the tablets of your heart what I am going to say. Use the one, to serve the other! But let me see that your choice will be that of Hercules. You will meet many to persuade you to the contrary; but remember, you may have a prompt guide in him who has most interest in your welfare; therefore, Louis, I ask your fearless confidence?"

While Ripperda continued to speak, his son thought within himself; if my father were disguised in the sombre vestments of the Jesuit, his spirit was even under a darker mask; I cannot recognise the harsh and despotic Ignatius, in the mild exhortations of this gracious parent!

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed he, throwing himself on the Duke's bosom, "you have your son's heart! — and in

that, where is the thought that can be hidden from you !”

Ripperda smiled, “ Louis,” said he, “ these impassioned emotions may be convincing witnesses of your southern origin! — but you must imitate your father; and temper your Spanish blood with some of the phlegm of the country in which you received your education. With one half of mankind, this sort of feeling would be ridiculed, because not understood, while those who could comprehend it, would watch it as the betrayer of your secrets, and manage it to the establishment of their own. The heart is man’s citadel, it is only open country with feeble woman! And perhaps, there is too much of her nature in all vehement expressions of sensibility !”

Louis coloured, as checked in heart, he raised himself from his father’s arms. “ Sir,” said he, “ I dared to shew these sensibilities to my father, because I trusted”

he knew I was not wanting in the mental strength to prove myself a man."

"True, Louis; but that is a character which ought not to require occasional proofs. It should be manifest in the unvarying equability of your conduct."

Louis looked on his father.

"One of my books is the human countenance;" resumed the Duke, "and your's is very legible at present. I do not require you to change your constitution, but to control its impulses. Endearments are rejected between man and man, because they admit hypocrisy. All can affect to caress; but the sober aspect of real fidelity is not easily assumed. In temperate discourse you look into your companion's eyes, and read his soul. But when the heart is shewn, by the agitation of the nerves, and the head is thrown on the bosom; how can you then find an avenue to the mind? Man, therefore, demands of man, the open, unreserved countenance; and leaves to

woman, that caressing enthusiasm, which may either express tenderness, veil modesty, or mask a deceptious heart. Hence, my son, we are oftener deceived in love than friendship ; but you must beware of both."

Louis was agitated by the concluding remark. It recalled the image of the Countess, and the last scene wherein he beheld her, which made him wish to forget the rest : quelling, however, every appearance of disturbance, and only returning the kind pressure of his father's hand ; with more emphasis than he intended, he exclaimed, " in all things, honoured Sir, I will strive to be obedient to your counsels. But do not despise the expressions of an affection, which would not know a dearer object than yourself !"

" I do not despise, but I restrain them ; for you must be habituated to self-command. Cherish the confidence that you now possess. Let me be, in-

deed, the repository of all your thoughts ; and though, in some cases, I may disapprove, you shall never have cause to remember the Sieur Ignatius in your father."

The smile which had so often lightened from the dark lip of the Sieur, now beamed in sun-like radiance over the bright countenance of Ripperda. Louis could have thrown himself again into his arms, and pressed to his grateful bosom, the gracious heart of his father ; but he remembered the lesson he had received, and merely clasped his hand to his lips.

Ripperda passed the remainder of the time in which he sat with his son, in giving him instructions relative to their present situation at Vienna. He told him, that in right of his restored rank, he was now Marquis de Montemar ; and to honour his father's services in this momentous embassy Their Majesties of

Spain had appointed him Secretary of Legation.

“ You are young, for so responsible an office,” continued he; “ but the Queen knows how ably you fulfilled my duties, during my wounds; and herself suggested to the King, rewarding your zeal by so answerable an appointment. The courts of both countries are ignorant of this reason; therefore, you must make up in dignity of deportment, what you want in years; and, to common eyes, in previous service. The world is governed by appearance.”

Ripperda then spoke on the causes and terms of his re-union with Spain. And with some astonishment, and more regret, Louis comprehended that his father had also been received into the pale of its established church. Louis ventured to express his sentiments on this communication.

“ It was my original religion,” re-

turned the Duke, " the free-thinking spirit of independence had betrayed me in youth to the cavils of Reformation, but time and study reconciled me to the faith of my ancestors. Two learned Jesuits at Madrid completed the work, and I am now as good a Catholic as any in the Spanish dominions. The same masters may convert my son; and then, Louis, I shall have no wish ungratified."

" I was born a protestant, Sir;" replied Louis, " and I believe I shall die one."

" Be what your conscience dictates," returned the Duke, " only remember that your father and your king are Catholics; and you will not fail in honour to their church."

Louis bowed his head in respectful acquiescence. The Duke soon after withdrew to his chamber of audience. Many of the old Spanish settlers in Austria, who had been oppressed there since the changed succession in Spain, were in

waiting, to petition the ambassador of their ancient country, to interfere with the Imperial court in their behalf.

Titles were never points in the ambition of Louis but as they were symbols of pre-eminence in nobler respects; he, therefore, was not insensible to the satisfaction of having the alienated honours of his race restored to him by the virtues of his father. Such were his thoughts, when the subject occurred to him; but when the Duke de Ripperda first left the room, the mind of his son was wholly absorbed in the happiness of having at last seen, and conversed with, and been received to the heart of such a parent. That the stern Ignatius, from whom he had shrunk, while he revered him, and this benignant parent were one, amazed, while it called forth all his gratitude to heaven for the preservation of that parent through the perils of his disguise.

As he meditated on the complete

change which had taken place in his father, since he had dismissed the garb of the Jesuit ; and recollected the lessons he had received from him in both characters ; — from the one, on the policy of assuming the thing that is not ; and from the other, the recent injunction to conceal his real feelings ; — he conceived a hope that the Duke de Ripperda might not be so averse to the Duke of Wharton, as the *Sieur Ignatius* had thought it expedient to represent. In his next discourse with his father, he determined to name the Duke ; for in spite of the late reproof to his indulged sensibility, his heart yearned to utter all its affection and gratitude to the friend, who had rewarded his repeated apparent insulting avoidance, by twice having been his preserver.

After the Duke de Ripperda dismissed his Spanish suppliants, he repaired to a private council of the Austrian ministers, to discuss the preliminaries to his public

reception by Their Cæsarean Majesties. Louis did not leave his apartments, till he heard the wheels of his father's carriage in the court-yard. It was then near ten o'clock at night, and the colonades and palace were lit up in every direction with lamps and chandeliers.

He hastened towards the great saloon, and met the Duke in the anti-room. — They entered together. Several persons were present, who greeted Ripperda with an equal air of deference, though with different degrees of ceremonial obeisance. Their personal ranks were distinctly marked in each individual demeanour; and when the Duke introduced Louis as his son, they paid him compliments, which the young Marquis answered with little more than respectful bows. His father immediately led the way to the supper-room; and he, with the rest of the company, followed through a suite of superb chambers lined with attendants.

The entertainment was served in a style to which the Duke was accustomed, but which was novel to his son. The simple elegance of his Pastor-Uncle's table possessed every comfort; the hospitable board at Athelstone and Bamboorough groaned with the weight of the feast; and the feudal state he had seen at the banquets of the chiefs of Scotland, was that of plenty with barbarous festivity:—but here, all that was elegant and hospitable, stately and grand, were united in one assemblage of courtly magnificence.

The manners of Ripperda to his company were like his entertainment.—None could forget that he was the first man at table; but the condescending graces of his conversation, and a peculiar address, to which only the individual to whom it was pointed could be conscious, charmed all that were present, with a conviction that each one in particular was his especial favourite.

Louis's spirits were so absorbed in attention to his father's eloquent discourse on a variety of subjects, addressed to himself and others, that he spoke very little; and thought the time had flown, when the Duke rose from his chair, and the party, obeying the signal, bade him adieu for the night. When Louis was preparing to follow, his father stopped him.

“I am pleased with your general deportment this evening,” said he. “The dignified respect with which you treated those persons, (who, though holding subordinate situations to yourself in the embassy, are your seniors in years, and all of them men of family;) while it maintains your own superiority, will conciliate their good-will; and propitiate the envy that might busy itself in search of your faults.”

“Sir,” said Louis, blushing at the implied arrogance, “I had no idea of shewing any thing to those gentlemen,

but simple respect. And I am sorry that what I had no thought of should have appeared in my manner, to lessen the expression of that sentiment."

Ripperda shook his head, but not with gravity.

"I know you are a man of nice distinctions; and, that on the meaning of some terms, you and I have yet to agree. But I will trust your humility in some respects, to your haughtiness in others."

"My father?" exclaimed Louis. The Duke smiled.

"Ignatius might help us on this subject!" said he; "but I wish to speak with you about another order of persons. To-morrow you will be introduced to young men of the highest rank in Spain, the sons of Spanish Grandees of the first order. Wishing to see Vienna, they are nominally attached to this embassy; and though residing where they please, have places every day at my table. These you must treat with the suavity

of equality and confidence ; but beware of really giving them your friendship, or your trust. They are your future rivals with your sovereign. At present, their pursuit is pleasure. And, while you steadily keep your eye upon the one aim of your life — honourable distinction ! to these young men you must appear as inclined to folly as themselves.”

Louis's bright eye turned on his father.

“ It is even so ! ” continued the Duke, “ you must lull the circumventing watchfulness of their ambitious fathers, by seeming to share the dissipation of their sons. Me, they know, they dare not touch. But were you to appear all that I trust you are or will be, their roused jealousy would seize the accessible point ; and through you, they would seek to undermine the new superstructure I am raising to the glory of the house of Ripperda. Seem, therefore, careless of advancement, and eager for pleasure ; and

they may quietly submit to the growth of your early honours, when they are made to believe that your encreasing folly will render them the last. Use this caution now, and a time is not far distant, when you may shew yourself in these respects, according to the sentiments which direct your present questioning looks ; if, indeed, such sentiments will then be yours. They are going through an ordeal. You must prepare yourself for trials of a different nature from those you found so galling at the Chateau de Phaffenberg. There, you had only to endure ; here, you are called upon to endure and to resist : — to endure, nay to court temptation ; and to resist, and overcome it. You must be in the midst of every pleasure that can seduce or intoxicate the senses of man ; and you must see, and taste all, without allowing yourself to feel it enjoyment. To derive enjoyment, is to yield independence ; and

you must be independent of all, but the resources within yourself.”

Ripperda's voice sounded to his son like that of a trumpet. He loved to feel his strength; to struggle, and to conquer; though the war might only be in his own bosom. He listened, and longed for an opportunity of proving to his father, that whatever might be his sensibilities, he had no effeminacy in his soul. The Duke continued. —

“Your father does all that to which he exhorts you. He draws every one to his purpose, without permitting any thing to fix a link on him. From the age of twenty-one, I have been master of myself; and, from that circumstance, master of every human being, on whom I turned my eye, to do me service. From being the son of a banished man; and alienated from the land and honours of my race; I became a soldier, a statesman, a counsellor of nations! The country which had exiled my father, solicited

the return of his son! And now, the progress of my undeviating career, has brought me to the restoration of all the rights of my name; and raised it to a reputation, that is only bounded by the limits of the civilized world! Louis what I am, you must be."

During this speech, Louis, more than once saw the proud and lightning glance of the Sieur Ignatius. He felt an answering triumph; for the throes of an eager emulation were busy in his youthful heart. Unconsciously, his countenance reflected all his father's; for then, perhaps, there was not a sentiment within him, that was not absorbed in the single blaze of ambition. The Duke rose, speaking his last sentence; and with so undefinable an air of even fearful grandeur, that, for a moment, he seemed transformed a third time before his son. But the next instant, turning from the door to which he had advanced, the awful splendours of his countenance were softened into the

agreeable light of general complacency ; and, in his usual tone, he bade Louis retire to his chamber ; and be ready, at a certain hour on the morrow, to accompany his official presentation to the Emperor.

CHAP. XII.

THE suite of apartments in the *Palais d'Espagne*, which were allotted to Louis, were spacious in themselves, and superb in their furniture; and the train of attendants and equipages assigned to his service, were as sumptuously appointed as those of the Ambassador himself. The Duke had informed him, that all these were as absolutely at his command, as if he inhabited a separate dwelling. He was to consider himself at perfect liberty; to appear at the Ambassador's table, only when his inclination suited; to form what acquaintance he pleased; to go where he liked: in short, his father resigned all controul over his time or his actions, excepting the hours which must be dedicated to diplomatic duties, and

any proceedings which might eventually impede the grand objects of his life.

In the course of conversation, Louis had petitioned his father to take off the interdict which prohibited his correspondence with his friends in England. The cause for silence existing no longer, the favour was readily granted, but guarded with one condition; that he must not write of Ignatius in any other character than that of a Jesuit. That he was Ripperda's self must ever be preserved a profound secret. The Emperor was jealous of female interference, besides being suspicious of the affections of his wife; and the most vexatious consequences might be expected, should he discover that the Empress had been an agent in the late negociation. This, he would more than suspect, were he to be told that Ripperda had been *incognito* at Vienna. For the Imperial Charles was not ignorant of the influence that accomplished Statesman had gained over the

the youthful mind of Elizabeth, at her father's court; and that he had even exercised it to persuade her to accept the distinction offered her, as consort to the Emperor of Germany. Early influences are generally lasting ones; and though Charles had not sufficient sensibility, ever to have felt this in his own person; he had sagacity enough to have guessed it in that of his wife, had he received a single hint of but one clandestine meeting between her and Ripperda, before that statesman made his public appearance at the Austrian Court.

Louis readily engaged for circumspection; aware that his correspondence with the friends of his youth, would be on subjects of absorbing interest to them; purely egotistical: — while his own anxiety was to know the success of his application to Don Ferdinand; and how far the general comfort of the family was restored by Alice's released vows.

Before he could lay his head, (which

was all awake with life and happiness,) upon his pillow; he sat down to pour out his full heart to the venerable confidant of his earliest wishes, to the unerring guardian of his impassioned soul. As he wrote, the fierce flames of the wild ambition, which, an hour before, had rushed through his veins with a proud disdain of every obstacle, gradually subsided under the gentle ascendancy of the meek spirit with which he now conversed. The mild precepts of his benign instructor seemed again to whisper in his ear:—“Fly temptation. But when it pursues, or meets you, arm against it in the panoply of faith and virtue, and be not overcome. If you sink in a contest you did not seek; you may be pitied, and forgiven. If you fall in a conflict you provoked, men will deride, and God condemn you!”

Louis shuddered at his late presumptuous impulse; and blessing the pious cares, which could influence his mind, even at so wide a distance of place and

time, he continued to write. With what a reposing, smiling rapture at his heart, did he bend over the sheet on which he was now permitted to transmit all the feelings of that heart to the most indulgent, as well as wisest of friends!

A few words at the beginning, had explained his silence, by acknowledging, (without particularizing circumstances,) the mysterious nature of the affairs in which he had been engaged: — and then followed all the affection of a son; all the frank communications, where secrecy did not bind him, that would be grateful to the venerable man. But there was one subject he did not dare to touch on: — whenever it rose before him, he turned away, as from a lovely but a condemned spirit. His heart thrilled and trembled; and pressing it, he exclaimed — “I need not seek a contest!”

When he had closed this long epistle, with entreaties for frequent communications from the dear inhabitants of the

Pastorage, whether they were at Morewick or in Lindisfarne; he addressed a letter to Sir Anthony, as full of duty, as of descriptions and remarks calculated for his entertainment: and then, retiring to his pillow, found, what he did not expect, an immediate and sound sleep.

The morning brought Martini into his apartment. He came with a note from Ripperda, informing his son, that the Emperor would receive the Embassy at noon; he must therefore be in the saloon, habited in the Spanish mode, and according to his rank, half an hour before the time of going to the Imperial Palace. Louis was finishing his packet for England, when the confidential valet presented his message. He read the letter, and wrote his reply of obedience. Martini took the answer, with a bow of profound respect; but it had nothing of the obsequious homage, which degrades the person who pays it, without honouring him on whom it is bestowed.

“Your Excellency will pardon, I trust,” said he, “my former omissions of due reverence to the son of my master! I was ignorant, until now, that I attended other than the Chevalier de Phaffenberg; and according to the commands of the Duke, I was to consider him, as no more than his secretary, and the poor *cadet* of a ruined house. But it was a noble one: and I trust, my Lord, that though I might fail in honour to the Duke de Ripperda’s son, you will not accuse me of insolence to the Chevalier de Phaffenberg?”

“Worthy Martini!” cried Louis, rising from his seat, and shaking the hand of the valet, with true English warmth; “I have nothing to complain of from you. I honour your fidelity to your master, and your regard for the fallen in fortune. I am proud to claim equality with such sentiments! From this hour consider me as your friend.”

Martini, with the ardour of his coun-

try, threw himself on his knees, and fervently kissed the hand that pressed his; then hastily rising, with glistening eyes, and his hands clasped on his breast, he bowed and hastened from the apartment.

This little incident particularly pleased Louis. He had found a simple and a generous feeling in the confidential servant of a statesman; while all else, above, around, in that transforming sphere, seemed devoted to selfishness, or to artifice, of however refined a fabric. Musing on this, he submitted himself, without discussion, to be habited according to the fashion of his new country.

For Ripperda himself, when his son met him in the saloon, he was one bright effulgence of princely honours. His sword, his belt, his gartered knees; and all the jewelled insignia of Spanish chivalry, glittered on his person. The diamond coronet of his ancestors encircled his cap, surmounted by the crest of his

family, a golden eagle, under a plume of snow white feathers. — They waved before the bird of Jove, like fleecy clouds in the face of the sun. But gorgeous as as were these ornaments, they were not so brilliant as the countenance they were placed to adorn; the brightness of a high soul was there, that seemed rather to suffer the decorations of rank, than to require them.

The Duke was surrounded by the young Spanish Grandees, in the habits of their quality; but varied in colour and decoration, according to the caprice of the wearer. The real officers of the embassy were arrayed in one sumptuous uniform, and all distinguished with the golden cross of *Montesa*.

Ripperda presented his son to the nobles. Most of them, though young men, were Louis's seniors; but they saluted him with that respect which is usual in despotic governments, to persons holding powerful stations under the Sovereign.

The intimation his father had given him of their general pursuits, did not incline him in their favour; and, with, perhaps, too lofty an air of cold politeness, he met their first advances to social acquaintance. Some of them mistook this dignity of principle, (which acted without intention,) for the insolence of inflated vanity, at being placed above his compeers; and they who thought so, eyed him with resentment. Others conceived it to be mere reserve of disposition:—for none could derive it, from awkward shyness in a new situation. Every thing that Louis said or did was with a grace peculiar to himself; an ease, that spoke the high-born man; and a mind, conscious that no adventitious circumstance can really add to the consequence of him who builds his character on virtue.

The King and Queen of Spain had issued orders, that no expence should be spared to give their Ambassador every dignity in the eyes of the Imperial Court;

and the equipages and retinue which composed the suite of Ripperda, struck the inhabitants of Vienna with amazement; as nothing had equalled the pomp of this, his public entrance, since the coronation of the Emperor.

The audience chamber was crowded, and the foreign ambassadors were there, to mark the reception of the Spanish plenipotentiary. Charles received him with testimonies of respect he had never bestowed on any other Ambassador; and which filled those present with apprehensions of what those secret articles might be, which thus humbled the Emperor of Germany before the minister of his former rival. Louis, and the Spanish noblemen, were presented by Ripperda. Charles said a few words of ceremony to the young grandees, but signalized the son of the Ambassador by his particular notice; and, in a lowered voice, that none else might hear, complimented him on the talents he had shewn for

negotiation, during the illness of the *Sieur Ignatius*.

At the meeting of the council the preceding evening, *Ripperda* had intimated to the *Chancellor Sinzendorff*, that the *Chevalier de Phaffenberg* (whom the *Chancellor* had taken occasion to praise,) was his son; and in the morning *Sinzendorff* had explained the circumstance to the *Emperor*, with his remarks on the genius and strait forward integrity of the young politician.

When His Majesty turned to withdraw, he told the *Spanish Ambassador*, that the *Chancellor* would conduct him to the *Empress*, who was in readiness to receive the letter and picture he brought from the *Prince of Spain*, to the *Arch-Duchess*, her daughter.

As soon as the *Emperor* had quitted the chamber, *Ripperda* and his suite followed *Sinzendorff* towards the grand saloon. As *Louis* turned to obey, his heart anticipated the emotions he should

feel in again seeing Otteline; in again meeting the persuading looks of her gracious mistress and confidant. But how different did the Imperial Elizabeth appear in her court, to the benignant Princess, who was all ease and smiles in the *boudoir* of her beautiful favourite! She sat coldly regal, with the Austrian ladies of rank, standing behind, and on each side of her.

When the Duke de Ripperda approached the Imperial chair, Louis observed the reserved majesty of Elizabeth's countenance dilate into an expression of proud exultation: it haughtily swept the circle, while she stretched out her hand to the Spanish Ambassador, as bending on his knee, he presented the royal packet. She half rose to receive it, and then her lips and eyes beamed all the graciousness upon his father, which Louis had so often felt shining on himself. But there was a glowing flush on her cheek, and a something softer in her eye;

when the Duke pressed the hand to his lips, which she had given for the salute of ceremony. Louis then saw, it was the friend, and not the minister, that Elizabeth of Brunswick welcomed from her Imperial throne; and, at the same time, he could not but notice, that the position of his father, rather spoke the air of a Prince at the feet of beauty, than the prostration of a subject to exalted power.

“It is the mind alone,” thought Louis, “that debases actions, or ennobles them! One man would crouch and cringe like a slave, while this bends his knee, like Alexander before a sister princess!”

Had Louis pursued his observation, he would have understood that it was the dignity and peculiarity of this homage, which made it so estimable in the eyes, even of an Empress.

When the Duke presented his son and the Spanish Nobles, Louis cast down his

eyes; which, indeed, had never wandered from his father and herself: so fearful was he of encountering that face, whose resistless charms were only too apparent to his imagination. What the condescending Elizabeth said to him, he knew not, neither was he conscious how he had gone through the ceremony of presentation, till he felt her ivory fingers gently press his hand, in silent congratulation of what she supposed was then busy in his heart. He dreaded the purport of this worldless language; and with a tremor pervading his whole body, he rose from his knee, and falling back into the Spanish group, tried to recover self-possession.

Elizabeth continued for some time in conversation with Ripperda; and then giving her hand, according to usage, to the Chancellor to lead her out; as she passed near where Louis stood, she descried him, and spoke to her conductor. He immediately called to the Marquis

de Montemar, to attend Her Majesty's commands. Louis obeyed, in renewed disorder; and with a gracious smile, she gently whispered. "You attend the Duke de Ripperda this evening to the *Favorita*. It is the Dowager Empress's name-day; and you will see friends and foes. The Duke has received my permission to bring the young Spaniards to be presented to my daughter."

Louis bowed, and Her Majesty, with her own fair hand, gathering her robe from the pages who held it, disappeared by a small door into the private apartments.

When he looked round, to rejoin his father, he saw him discoursing with the circle of ladies who stood nearest the throne. Ripperda had already introduced his young grandees to the group; but on some of the ladies naming his son, he beckoned Louis, who immediately approached, and was presented also. His rapid glance soon convinced him the

looks he feared were not present; and relieved by this certainty, the effect was instantly apparent. The anxiety which so lately had embarrassed his words and actions, disappeared; and restored to ease, he replied with his usual ingenuous politeness, to the courtesy of the ladies who welcomed him to the court of Vienna. The Duke soon after took his leave of the fair assembly, and followed by the young Spaniards and his son, returned to the *Palais d'Espagne*.

It was the vernal month of May, and nature appeared in her robes of youth and laughing beauty. The tender azure of the sky was tinged with blushing radiance, while the soft green earth lay in enamelled smoothness, under the umbrageous canopy of trees and shrubs, diffusing odours from blossoms, flowers, and balmy zephyrs, laden with the warm breathing of the reposing sun.

As the carriage which contained Louis drove along the thronged *Prato*, towards

the palace of *la Favorita*, he descried the distant turrets of the Chateau de Phaffenberg. They stood gloomy and desolate, and he passed them by, like one awakened from the dead, looking aside on what had been his tomb. The Danube was now rolling its majestic flood, broad as a lake around the island of the palace. The company crossed to it in gay boats, borne along with silken sails, or rowed by silver oars, and when they stepped on shore, they found the whole a scene in fairy land.

On a raised platform, in the midst of a verdant lawn, round which the beauty and fragrance of all the seasons were collected, sat the Dowager Empress. Most of the Imperial family, excepting the Emperor and the Empress, were seated near her. Many of the court were also there; and in the brilliant circle Louis recognised the Duke of Wharton standing behind the chair of the Electress of Bavaria. The eye of Wharton seemed

to wander carelessly over the advancing party, without distinguishing any particular object. But the buz that announced the Duke de Ripperda attracted the notice of the Electress. Her curiosity was excited to see this formidable minister, whose influence had induced his royal master to overthrow her dearest schemes, by affixing the guarantee of Spain to the pragmatic sanction. She looked at his commanding figure, with lightning in her eyes; and as Ripperda approached to pay his respects to the Dowager Empress, she whispered in the bending ear of Wharton. The next instant her rapid glance caught the face of Louis, and fixed there. Again she whispered Wharton. What she said, and what the answer, was completely between themselves; all passed in so low a voice; but Louis heard the Duke laugh in his reply, as, without looking up from his folded arms, he leaned on Her Highness's chair.

Had Louis distinguished what was said, he would have learnt that the Electress recognised him immediately; and with astonishment, pointed him out to her companion, when she heard him presented to her illustrious grandmother as the son of Ripperda.

“ Could Your Highness believe it possible,” replied Wharton, “ that the fair Alheim would cast her tendrils round a fallen pillar ?”

The Electress did not withdraw her persevering gaze, though she ceased her whispers, for the Emperor and Empress approached from the house. The Duke de Ripperda was instantly engaged with the Imperial pair; and soon after Charles, putting his arm through his, turned with him to the opposite side of the lawn. As Elizabeth was passing Louis, to give her hand to the Dowager Empress, who wished to view the scene from the palace windows, she desired him to offer his arm to the venerable Princess. He has-

tened to bear his share in supporting the infirm footsteps of old age; a duty, which, to all ranks, was sacred with him; and during the walk, as the aged Empress was deaf, Elizabeth informed him, that the Arch-Duchess Maria Theresa being suddenly indisposed, the Countess Alheim attended her. "But," added the gracious speaker, "hope is the lover's comforter!"

She thought it was the ruby light of love that passed over the cheek of Louis, as she spoke; and she smiled as she placed the Empress in her chair, and dismissed him to the lawn. Trying to shake from his burning complexion, the evidence of his weakness, with a swift step he returned towards the platform. Wharton stood there, though the Electress had moved into the more general circle of the company. The Duke was talking with two or three persons, amongst whom was the Count Leopold Koninseg, a colonel in the Austrian service, and

the nephew of the Princess de Waradin, a Hungarian lady, to whom Ripperda had presented his son in the morning at the drawing-room. As Louis was hastening to the group that contained his friend, and his new acquaintance, the Princess de Waradin, leading a blooming girl of fifteen by the hand, interrupted him. The noble matron asked him if he had yet engaged himself for the dance. On his answering in the negative, she presented him to her daughter, with the compliment, "that there was no person with whom she should be so satisfied to see her Amelia make her first public appearance at court, as the son of the Duke de Ripperda."

Louis made a suitable answer to this politeness, and the pretty Hungarian received his bow with a smile. Other ladies, to whom also his father had introduced him in the morning, now drew around the graceful de Montemar. Invitations to various assemblies, were

given to him by a multitude of rosy lips ; and for half an hour before the dancing began, he was enchained in the fair circle ; not ungrateful for the flattering distinction, but longing for the moment of release, when he might at least, give one heart-felt pressure of the hand, to the friend who had twice saved him from a personal encounter with his father's enemies. He often turned his face from the smiling dames, with whom he was conversing, to seek a glance from his kind preserver ; but, though Wharton looked hither and thither, in talking with the passing groupes, a perverse fatality seemed to prevent his eyes ever falling where Louis stood. Impatience increased with disappointment, and almost ready to break from the throng that detained him, he gladly heard the music sound from an orchestra, near the arcades of the palace ; and, immediately a chamberlain approached, to summon the dancers to the soft green before the

imperial windows. The fair Amelia extended her hand to her partner, who took it with redoubled pleasure on seeing, by the direction in which the company turned to the rural ball-room, that he must pass close to the spot where Wharton stood.

As the gay procession moved on, the Duke turned carelessly on his heel, which withdrew him a little from the path, but not so far off, but that Louis heard Leopold Koninseg ask him whether he knew the Marquis de Montemar.

“Who is he?” negligently replied the Duke.

“The Spanish ambassador’s son,” replied Koninseg, “shall I introduce him?”

“No,” returned Wharton, “he seems very well engaged; and I am not ambitious of the acquaintance.”

Louis was startled at these words; but recollecting the Duke’s situation with the Bavarian faction; and the risks he

had already run, between its revenge and his friend's safety ; he soon comprehended that prudence had suggested this apparent indifference.

The dance began ; and in its exhilarating maze, of motion, music, and sparkling beauty, Louis found all that bouyancy of spirits return, with which he used to animate the smaller, but not less festive circles of his native land. The ethereal grace of his movements attracted admiration in a country where the graces of dancing are a science ; and the Electress, again turning to Wharton, who had accompanied her to the flowery lists of the waltzers, desired him to observe the extraordinary elegance of the Anglo-Spaniard. Wharton saw that several of the young grandees were standing near, and observed one of them cast a disdainful glance on the Electress, when she made the remark. Princess de Waradin was also a spectatress ; and while her eye complacently followed the airy

flight of her daughter on the sustaining arm of Louis, she took up the Electress's observation, and replied, "there is not so fine a dancer in the circle, as the Marquis de Montemar?"

"Because he happens to have the best figure in the circle," returned Wharton, "and a well-made man cannot be awkward if he would."

The Electress smiled, and whispered the Duke; "you must get him amongst us!"

"Crown me for Actæon, when I do!"

Wharton did not require an interpreter to the thickening clouds on the brow of the young Spaniard, who, muttering something to his companions, their looks suddenly reflected his, and they all turned abruptly and haughtily from the ring. The Electress drew close to the garlands, which composed it; and ordering a chair to be placed there, sat down, and conversed at her ease with the groupe around. Louis's eyes often glanced to-

wards the animated Duke. But his favour with Her Highness was too visible, to allow surprise that he did not give attention to any one else. Indeed, he appeared as careless of remark, as he seemed pleased with his situation, and hovered near her with the familiarity of perfect confidence. Her circle of ladies courted his smiles, as the guarantee of her's ; and he trifled, and talked with them all, as his humour dictated. But in the midst of this gallant badinage, the men regarded him as something more than the gay *Cicisbeo*, who had followed the illustrious mourner from her widowed pilgrimage through Italy. They were aware of his political genius ; that the lap of beauty could not lull it to repose ; and with less surprise than wonder, they contemplated certain changes in the mutual relations of states, which they knew must have arisen from him ; but when or how his manœuvres were devised and executed, they could not guess

by observation on himself. For in all situations he seemed equally open and disengaged.

Ripperda passed behind the Bavarian party, surrounded by the foreign ambassadors. The Electress was mortified at the sight: — “Behold the flatterers!” cried she, to her gay companion.

“Dogs will worship the moon!” answered the Duke, carelessly: “and their hymn is desperate howling.”

Without farther thought of what covered the polished brow of his mistress with heavy frowns, he turned to rally one of the young ladies of honour, for having refused to dance. The Bavarian almoner stood near. He was the only person, excepting the Electress, who knew that the late rupture between France and Spain was the work of Wharton. Marvelling within himself at the volatility of the man, who had so circumvented the gravest heads; and at the jocund indifference with which he beheld

the triumph of his political adversary ; the worthy ecclesiastic, with a half-reproaching smile, touched his arm. — “ I believe, Duke,” said he, “ it is all one to you, whether you fire your own, or another’s territories ; from very *gaieté de cœur*, as either burn, you play !”

“ Weeping at calamities is to double them,” replied Wharton ; “ and I never had any passion for sackcloth.”

“ No,” replied the Electress, “ I believe your perversity, enjoys the wreck that has been made of your own plans !”

“ When the wind blows, he is but a fool who sits down to cry in the blast ! common-sense, my sweet Electress, draws his cloak about, and walks merrily through the storm.”

“ But he does not scoff at the destructive elements !” replied the ecclesiastic ; “ may not the Duke de Ripperda think disparagingly of so smiling a rival ?”

“ My good Lord Almoner,” returned

Wharton, "I care not what Duke de Ripperda thinks. There is a season for all things! And when I am with the fair, I forget the follies of other men, and content myself with my own."

Whatever were his motives with regard to Louis, no act of recognition passed, either from his voice, or his looks, towards him, during the whole evening; and Louis, taking the tone from a judgment his enthusiasm made him deem infallible, behaved towards him with the same reserve. They often approached each other in the change of amusements; they sometimes passed close; and then the heart of Louis beat, and his cheek glowed, as he felt the dear attraction. As he was handing the daughter of the Princess de Waradin to the supper-room, he saw Wharton at a distance in one of the vestibules, conversing with the Count de Patinos; a young man of the highest rank amongst the Spaniards

who had joined the embassy of their country.

The Electress and her party did not stay supper. It was in a style answerable to the august *jour de fête*; and at a late hour, the Emperor and Empress rose. Before Louis could pass from the table at which he had sat, to join his father, who had been the distinguished personage at the Imperial board, he was intercepted by a moving and involving throng. In short, he soon learnt, that from Ripperda's unexampled favour with the reconciled sovereigns, his son was become an object of calculating and universal attention. Some of the Spaniards had even drawn off from the proud side of de Patinos, and glided towards Louis; to gain, by his means, a freer passage into the circles, which seemed so eager to make him their center.

De Patinos was young, handsome, and ambitious. He was the son of the Marquis de Castallor, and the near kinsman

of the venerable Grimaldo, the present ostensible minister in the cabinet of Spain : — and therefore, to see the almost regal honours paid to the Duke de Ripperda, whom he affected to consider as only the agent of that minister, excited jealousy for his own consequence, reflected from Grimaldo. But, that himself should be overlooked and disregarded in the presence of what he called the upstart Marquis de Montemar, because he was the son of this arrogant Ripperda, inflamed him with a hatred, that only waited opportunity to shew its malignant nature.

As wealth and rank are considered the corner stones of happiness in this world of selfish enjoyment, it was not to be wondered at, that a marriage with such a foreigner as Louis de Montemar, should be considered an advantageous object, by many of the most illustrious families at the German court. The restoration of Ripperda to his Spanish rights had given

him rank with the first nobles in any land. His blood was superior to most of them, as it flowed from the mingled current of three lines of princes. And his riches, from his restituted property in Spain and the Indies ; from his former fortune, transported from the Netherlands ; and daily redoubling, by the exhaustless resources of commerce ; were beyond the powers of calculation. It was not, then, a subject of surprise, though it might be of envy, that the heir of all this wealth and honours should be a point of ambition to the proudest mothers in Vienna ; and as the expectant was also handsome and accomplished, it was not a wonder that many of the daughters smiled upon the young de Montemar. He saw many fair, and more elegant ; but none so fair, none so conspicuously elegant, as the graceful Otte-line, whose absent form floated in fond regrets at the bottom of his heart. He sighed to think, that the spirit was not so

fair as its temple; and then he sighed again, as he checked himself for the repining pang which accompanied the remembrance.

CHAP. XIII.

THE two following days were passed in official arrangements, previous to the execution of certain articles in the treaty, which the Spanish sovereigns were impatient to have performed. Ripperda spent the evenings with the Austrian ministers, and Louis at the Princess de Waradin's. But on the morning of the third day, when he was sitting at his post, and making minutes of some preliminaries, which the Emperor demanded, before the actual betrothment of his eldest daughter to Prince Carlos of Spain; the Empress, who was in her husband's private cabinet at this discussion, stood over Louis as he wrote; and when he had finished his memorandums, she said in a low voice, — “ My daughter is now

well enough to bear company. You will see her and Otteline in my drawing-room to-night? and you must impress her as favourably of your Prince, as you have fixed her governess in behalf of yourself."

Elizabeth turned away; and Louis saw neither the paper that was before him, nor the royal presence leaving the room. He was lost in the tumult of his thoughts, till his father, touching his arm, told him the council was broke up.

When Ripperda received the invitation for the evening, for himself and his son, he asked permission to include the Count de Patinos in the proposed honour; as it would gratify King Philip to have the imperial notice extended in succession to the young grandees in the suite.

"But never to the exclusion of de Montemar," replied the Empress; "I regard him as my own *élève*. Do with the rest as you please, Duke; for you know the pleasure I have in promoting your interest."

Ripperda knew all the avenues to the noble heart of Elizabeth; and he made her a reply, that lit up her gracious countenance with an emotion direct from the soul.

Louis walked as in a dream, from the hour in which he was told he should meet Otteline, to the moment of his going to the palace. The imperial saloon was full, though not crowded. Having paid his homage to the Empress, he turned round, as she directed him, while certain well-known sounds were vibrating on the harp. The object he expected met his eyes. The instruments of music were in an adjoining apartment, opened to the saloon by a canopied arch; and Otteline stood there, just risen from the harp, and attending to something that was addressed to her by the Archduchess Theresa, who was seated at a harpsichord. She wore the portrait of her future husband, Prince Carlos, suspended at her neck; and the timid bride was evidently preparing to

sing to the Emperor her father, who stood near her. Lovely as she was, in the first morning of her youth; her soft blue eyes turned upwards, with a gaze of almost infantine attention upon the face of her beautiful instructress; yet the eye of the beholder could not rest upon the blooming girl. That beautiful instructress seemed nothing less than a being of a superior order. She leaned over her like some bright creature of the air, hovering near her sweet but earthly charge. Louis felt a mist pass over his memory. The abhorrent words of her lips, which he thought must burn before him, in accusing characters, for ever, flew at once from their station; and his heart rose in his bosom, with an impulsive violence to throw himself at her feet, and forget all the world and himself, in the rapturous moment of swearing that he loved her. But, if celestial spirits do indeed surround the path of those who would contend for heaven; the guar-

dian seraph of Louis, at that moment breathed upon his dissolving soul, and strengthened it to virtue. With a bitter contempt of his weakness, he tore his eyes from the dangerous contemplation ; and followed his father and the Empress, to pay his respects to her Imperial husband.

While the Emperor discoursed with Ripperda, Elizabeth addressed her favourite.

“ Otteline,” said she, with a smile, “ I hope you will grant as honourable notice to the Marquis de Montemar, as that with which you graced the Chevalier de Phaffenberg !”

The Countess looked up, with a blush bright as the tints of Aurora ; and while she sought to meet the eyes of Louis, which were covered with their “ veiled lids ;” she softly answered, — “ The Marquis de Montemar is too well convinced of the esteem in which I held the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, to require that I

should encrease my consideration of him, under any other name."

He bowed in silence. But Her Majesty, seeing the Emperor and Ripperda walk together into the adjoining room, as she turned to follow them, added — "De Montemar, I leave you to assist the Countess in selecting a duet for my daughter to sing."

This command Louis could not disobey; and though a quivering fire shot through all his veins, he was not the less determined to persevere in the assumption of a coldness which his reason dictated; and which, he trusted, would so pique the sexual dignity of Otteline, that he should never be demanded to a second interview. With obedient haste, and to occupy himself, he began to turn over the music books. The young Princess took hold of the Countess's arm, and artlessly whispered. —

"Do ask the Marquis de Montemar, whether Prince Carlos is really like this ugly picture!"

Otteline whispered in return : — “ I am sure the Marquis de Montemar will be honoured in replying to Your Highness ; and he will tell you that Prince Carlos is very handsome.”

None of this was spoken so low, but that Louis heard it all ; and the Archduchess, holding up the jeweled portrait, said to him in a timid voice : — “ Do tell me, if he is so very disagreeable ? — I could never endure to leave my beautiful mamma, and charming governess, to look always upon so frightful a face as this !”

Louis glanced at the picture ; which was, indeed the portrait of a plain, but it was a sensible countenance. The ingenuous eyes of the Princess, turned from it, to those of Louis, with anxious enquiry.

“ I never saw the Prince,” replied he, “ But Your Highness must pardon me, if I do not think this portrait disagreeable ? It expresses a noble mind ; and without such an expression, the finest

features in the world would want the soul of beauty."

Maria Theresa looked earnestly in the face of Louis. She had never done so before; and then turning her eyes again on the picture, she drew a deep sigh.

"Come will not Your Highness sing?" asked the Countess, presenting a duet.

"No," replied she, "I shall go, and beg mamma, to permit you to sing alone;" then whispering her, as she was leaving her seat, she put her arm round her neck, and softly said — "Oh, my happy Otte-line! He that you are to marry, has both a handsome and a noble countenance!"

Louis could not escape hearing this; nor seeing the quick pressure with which the Countess strained her young charge to her breast; who in some apprehension that she had been overheard, broke away, with a slight blush tinging her lilly complexion.

He was now alone in the music-room, with her, whose presence he felt in every

nerve. The parting whisper of the Princess; and the responsive action of the Countess, followed by a fluttering sigh, which now vibrated in his heart, made him tremble for himself. He knew not how to fly, and he felt it was perilous to remain. Hastily closing a music-book, he said with a forced smile, "Since the Arch-duchess declines singing, my duty here terminates!" and with a hurrying bow, he started from the instrument.

Otteline was, now, in a no less agitated state than himself. She read in his averted looks, and haste to leave her, that she was no longer to consider him as her lover; and, not suspecting the real cause, her own ambitious views suggested to her, that his father's higher prospects were the origin of this changed demeanour. Aware that carrying matters with too lofty a hand had lost her the son of the Marquis Santa Cruz, she determined on a different mode with that of Ripperda; and while a large drapery of the curtained arch

was yet between him, and the observation of the company in the saloon, she ventured in rapid but suppressed accents, to murmur out — “ Oh, Marquis, why are you not the obscure *Dé Phaffenberg*?— Then, we should not have met:— or never parted thus!”

Her voice had arrested him. Her words transfixed his heart. He stood, but he did not speak. She resumed. —

“ It is as I foresaw. My enemies have prevailed! — Your father objects to my humble birth; and you turn from me, to seek a more illustrious bride?”

“ No Madam,” returned Louis, believing himself now called upon to pass the final sentence upon his relapsing passions; “ my father has not yet spoken to me on the subject. Neither do I seek, or wish, for any other bride:—For — Oh, Otte-line,” cried he, turning on her a look, in which all the contention of his soul was declared; “ Where should I find one so lovely?— One, to whom I could more in-

tensely devote this adoring heart? But yourself has separated us for ever!"

She turned pale as the pearls which bound her forehead.

"Then it is my enemies!" cried she, "But if they have coupled my name with Don Ferdinand d' Osorio's, in any tale of slander; believe it as false as that, which the Electress of Bavaria has published to the ruin of my fame. You know how I am the victim there! And this is invented, to put you from making the only restitution that can redeem me to the envious world!"

The vehemence with which she spoke, and the mention of Don Ferdinand's name, connected with her own, cast a new and an appalling light upon the apprehension of her lover. He recollected that Don Ferdinand had left Vienna, to rid himself from, what his father called, a disgraceful entanglement of his affections; and to find it possible that Otteline might have been its object, confounded all his

faculties. The broad appeal to his honour, in the last sentence of her remonstrance, did not the less convince him, that all was not right, in the tenacity with which she urged bonds on him, he had shewn himself determined to break. Braced, therefore, in his resolution, in a collected voice, he briefly answered.

“ No, Madam ; I have heard no slanderous tales against you. Until this moment, I was not aware that Don Ferdinand d’Osorio was even known to you ; and had it been told to me, by any but yourself, I should have spurned the information. My heart alone is your accuser.”

The renewed emotion, with which the latter words were uttered, and even their import, revived the colour of hope upon the cheek of the Countess. She thought, if his heart alone were her accuser, she had also an advocate there, that would be too powerful for so unassisted an adversary. She smiled bewitchingly, for it

was through rushing tears; and laying her hand on his arm, said in a tender and trusting voice, — “ And what does it allege against me ? ”

Louis did not look towards her. Her touch ran like wild-fire through his veins; but the sensations which shook him, only rendered him more desperate to fulfil his resolution; and he exclaimed, “ that I did love you — that I adored you! — that I was grateful, for the regard with which you honoured me, — I believe I shall carry the scars on my heart, to my grave: — but, with me, there is a power beyond love — that of virtue! I would sooner have this heart torn from my body, or all it delights in, buried from my sight; than purchase their enjoyment, by admitting one stain on my conscience. When I last saw you, in the conference with the Chancellor and the Empress; you declared, and proved yourself of an opposite opinion! You

violated the sacredness of a seal ; and you defended that breach of honour, on principles which destroy me to remember !”

Louis stopped, and covered his bloodless face with his hand. — The Countess, though paralyzed to the heart, by so unexpected a disclosure, gathered hope from the pale statue that uttered it. “ His frozen virtue, will relent !” thought she ; and clasping his arm, with the warm pressure of doubting agitation, she tremblingly said, “ Oh, de Montemar, is such the reward of my self-sacrifice. What am I to expect from this exacting virtue ?”

“ That I may die,” — replied Louis, with a strong effort ; “ but that we meet no more.”

This was the axe to the ambitious Otteline ; and with a shriek, she could not restrain, she staggered, and fell prostrate on the floor.

The convulsive cry, and the confused

noise of her fall, were heard in the same moment, in the adjoining saloon. Elizabeth, whose thoughts were on what was passing between her favourite and the son of her friend, sprang from her seat, behind the Emperor's chair. Charles was at quadrille with Ripperda, the Princess de Waradin, and another lady. Every body started from their respective positions: but no one, except the young Arch-duchess, durst follow Her Majesty, as she had not commanded the attendance of any.

The Emperor laid down his cards, and asked what had happened. Ripperda was not aware that his son was engaged in it, and with perfect indifference followed the example of the Sovereign, in rising from his chair. But the Princess de Waradin, who had observed Louis having been left with the favourite, rather sarcastically replied to the Emperor's question.

“ If Your Majesty will do the Marquis de Montemar the honour of enquiring of

him, he can give every information ; as he has been *tête à tête* with Countess Altheim, in that room, for some time."

Ripperda knew the character of the favourite ; and recollecting his son's admiration of her ; with an alarm he did not allow to be visible, he requested the Emperor's commands, to assist the Empress's interference in whatever accident might have happened.

"Certainly," replied he, "and let any body who may be of service, go with you."

This license sent every-body into the room.

Elizabeth had found Louis, on one knee, by the side of the insensible Otte-line. He was pale, and speechless. And fearing that he might soon be in the same state with her he ineffectually attempted to raise, while the young Archduchess clung, weeping, to her lifeless friend, the Empress turned round at the approaching steps ; and the first that was

near her, being Sinzendorff, in a hurrying, but suppressed voice, she said, — “Chancellor, take care of de Montemar, take him from these people’s eyes.”

Almost without consciousness, Louis obeyed the impulse of Sinzendorff’s arm, and soon found himself withdrawn from the gaze of strangers. The Chancellor had led him, without speaking, across a passage that opened from the music-room, into the Imperial library. When he saw his agitated companion throw himself into a seat, and cover his face with his clasped hands, the worthy statesman laid his hand on his shoulder while he broke silence.

“Marquis, will you tell me frankly? Do you love the Countess Alheim?”

The friendly tone in which this was asked, recalled Louis in some measure to himself; and without altering his position, for he shrunk from shewing the weakness that might be discovered in his countenance, he answered.

“ I do love her, more than I could have thought it possible, after a full conviction that she can no longer be conducive to my happiness ! Oh, my lord, you were present at the scene which decided my fate. What she then avowed, convinced me that she and I must never be united : I have just dared to tell her so.—But the situation to which it reduced her, severs my soul from my body.”

“ Virtuous young man,” cried Sinzen-dorff, “ let it not sever your principle from your soul ! You are formed for better things than an intriguing woman’s slave. Hear what I am now going to say to you ! But as you are worthy the confidence I place in you ; and as a breach of it would ruin me with the Imperial family ; you must not discover, even to your father, that the facts I am going to state have been learnt from me. When I have told them, examine into their truth, and act on the result. Know

then, that the woman, who causes you this emotion, is unworthy of a single regret from a mind like yours. Could you be satisfied with beauty alone, I acknowledge it is there in amplest perfection; but she is without one feminine feeling, wholly abandoned to ambition, and careless by what means she raises herself to the point of her hopes. At the age of sixteen she married one of the worst characters in the Imperial court, to be elevated to the rank of nobility. When a widow, she attempted the affections of several noble strangers, who, however, were too wary to be taken in her toils; but at last she entangled the passions of my sister's son, Don Ferdinand d'Osorio; and wrought him to the most extravagant excesses, while her own selfish aim was only to perpetuate her rank. This, his father told me; but he interfered, and the young man recovered his senses. Her next trial was on yourself! And I solemnly assure you,

that from the first of your appearance in this palace, she knew that you were not the Chevalier de Phaffenberg. And, though I doubt not, she prefers your youth and graces, to the age and decrepitude of the dotard to whom she first sold her duty as a wife; I know her well, and can aver, that she has no value for the superiority of your mental qualities. Do not mislead yourself, de Montemar, by investing her with your own feelings. It is not the loss of yourself that caused the situation in which you left her; but the loss of an illustrious husband:—the loss of one, who would have re-introduced her to the circle which her pride insulted, and the members of which, dread, while they despise her. My dear Marquis, excepting the infatuated Empress, she has not one friend in Vienna!”

“She warned me, that she had enemies,” replied Louis, in an interrupted voice, “but with me, her worst enemy

is herself. Chancellor, I am grateful for what you have said, and you shall find by my fidelity, that I am so. But not even all these charges could have weighed against the pleadings of my heart in her favour, had I not been present that fatal evening in the *boudoir*."

"A man of your principles," replied Sinzendorf, "ought rather to regard it as a providential evening! — If they be principles, you will abide by them; and I shall see you free, honoured, and happy. If they be no more than sentiment, (which is common with youth!) they will evaporate in her first sighs, and I shall soon have to congratulate her as Marchioness de Montemar. In that case, I will forget all that I have said, since I cannot disbelieve it."

Louis felt the force, and the friendship, of this admonition.

"Your Excellency shall never have reason to forget the generous interest you have taken in my happiness. And,

in apology for this emotion, you must accept the excuse of one, young as myself, (but, oh, on how enviable an occasion!) *my body trembles at the purpose of my soul.*"

“ Could I believe, that she did not love me, my task would have less of torture !” This last thought, was in his mind, though he did not utter it; and before the Chancellor could proceed with the commendation this resolution merited, a page appeared at the door, to inform them the Emperor had dismissed the company; and that the Duke de Ripperda awaited the Marquis in the vestibule.

CHAP. XIV.

NOT a word passed between Louis and his father, while they drove home. Count de Patinos was in the carriage ; and would have sat mute also, had not the Duke, with his usual power over all tempers, brought the sullen youth to converse freely on the entertainments of the evening.

As soon as they alighted, Ripperda desired his son to accompany him to his cabinet. Louis was in such heavy internal distress, he hailed the command as a summons to unburthen his unloaded bosom ; and to receive that advice, or rather support, in the fulfilment of his resolution, he found he so woefully required. He followed his father with alacrity. When the Duke had closed the

door, and saw that his son had thrown himself into a seat, he took a place near him.

“ Now,” said he, “ the time is come, when you are to give the confidence you promised me. I no longer consider myself the arbiter of your conduct. That responsibility I leave to yourself. The extensive duties of my own destiny are sufficient for me. I, therefore, shall advise, but I command no more. You must rise or fall by your own resolves; and, if I guess right, you stand now, on a point of no insignificant decision. Tell me, what has passed between the Countess Alheim and you, to give rise to the extraordinary scene of this evening; and to sanction the request which the Empress made to me at parting, that I would go to her to-morrow, *to decide on the fate of one, who was dear to her, as her own life!* — Have you pledged yourself to the Countess?”

“ I hope not,” earnestly replied Louis.

“ I do not understand you !” returned his father, “ by what has just occurred, she has shewn to the whole court, what she wishes people to suppose has passed between you ; and you must be aware that the favorite of Elizabeth is not to be treated with idle gallantry. What grounds, then, have you to hope, that you have not pledged yourself beyond recall ? Or, did the warning voice of the *Sieur Ignatius* come to late ?”

“ It came too late,” replied Louis, “ to save me from the intoxication of her beauties ; and no prudence on my part, could counteract the effects of that luckless rencontre with the Electress of Bavaria. Yet, in the wildest tumults of my heart, I still wrestled with myself ; in the very moment of my greatest weakness, I recollected the *Sieur's* admonition, and, re-awakened to filial duty, checked the vow on my lips ; and, telling her I was not my own, I trust, I saved my honour.”

Ripperda shook his head, "Louis, did I not warn you against the power of beauty?"

"You did!" vehemently replied he, "and, from this hour, I forswear it for ever!"

Being ignorant of the real cause of this abjuration, it surprised the Duke. He had supposed that Louis's disorder had arisen from a consciousness of having transgressed the spirit, if not the letter, of the Sieur's injunctions, and that Otte-line's emotion was to be dated from fear that his father would not sanction the romantic passion of her lover. For many reasons, the Duke had no wish to sanction it; and while he regretted that woman was fair, and youth susceptible, he was pleased to hear the unexpected exclamation from his son. He did not remark on it, but required a recital of particulars, word for word, of all that had passed between him and the Countess,

that he might be an impartial judge of Louis's freedom, or his bonds.

He obeyed ingenuously, till he came to the parts where her conduct might be translated into a direct wooing of himself. Ripperda saw him hesitate, and the generous colour that mounted to his down-cast eyes.

“ Proceed,” said he, “ I can divine what your honour, or your delicacy inclines you to conceal. She played upon your open nature, to make you believe she loved you so passionately, she could not await your time of drawing the secret from her! I know the sex, Louis. For more than thirty years, I have been an object of their various practices. And, once for all, you may receive it as an unerring rule, that, when a woman runs before a man in the profession of her love, her love is nothing more than profession. Her views are something baser.”

Ripperda pursued the subject; and Louis was, at last, brought to acknowledge, that the Countess had given him reason to believe that she loved him devotedly, — too devotedly; and then, without with-holding a circumstance, he related the whole affair, from the commencement of their acquaintance, till the moment when he wished to close it for ever. But, he confessed that what had happened in the music-room, had roused all within him to rebellion, though his judgement was as stern as ever against the pleadings of his infatuated senses.

“ Oh, Sir !” cried he, “ I love, and I despise her. And yet, when I stood over her insensible form, which had become so, from the wound I had inflicted, I could not but ask myself, — Am I a god, that I should thus ruthlessly condemn human error, and break the heart that loves me ?”

The Duke was a long time silent, after his son had ceased speaking. Then

looking up, he abruptly said, "Louis de Montemar, you are the first man of your sort, with whom I ever came in contact. I see of what spirit you are; but it will not do in the station you fill, or in the times in which we live. The world is always changing, and you must go with it, or it will leave you. I ought not to have left you so long at Lindisfarne!"

Louis turned his eye on his father.

"I do not blame your instructor for educating you like himself. But the style is obsolete, Louis. Had you been intended for a desert island, it might have been well; but a citizen of the world requires other maxims. The fault is mine, that I did not bring you to me before. Now, you come into society, like an unarmed man into the midst of his enemies; and, instead of hastening to shelter, you expose yourself to their weapons, by acts of impotent hostility. You must content yourself in maintaining your own principles; to stretch an-

other's virtue to your standard, you will always find a vain work of supererogation. In all that you have described, the Countess Alheim has only acted as any ambitious woman would have done ; and ambition is not less rooted in the sex, than in ourselves. She must not, therefore, be contemned for that. Neither do I object to her, on account of her obscure birth. The blood of your family is too essentially illustrious, not to raise to its own elevation, whatever we mingle with its stream. But I wish to strengthen our hands in Spain, by a marriage between my heir and one of its native daughters. Besides, the Countess Alheim is dangerous in herself. Her haughty spirit would embroil you with this, and every court, to which you might conduct her ; and persons might be inclined to disrespect the man who could suffer the weakness of passion to subject him to an union so universally despised."

During this discourse, the confidential

warning of the Chancellor seemed to sound again in the ear of Louis. He recollected the hints which Wharton had dropped on the same subject; and, with sickening attention, listened to his father, who, in less reserved language, related every leading event of the life of the beautiful favourite. No word glanced at her honour, as a chaste woman; but, every sentence completed the portrait of mean-spirited, insatiable ambition. Shocked to the soul, by the description of Count Alheim, whose character was of such grossness, that it seemed impossible for a virtuous woman to consent to be his wife; Louis hastily exclaimed, as the Duke rose to depart. "I will never see her more! I will never trust myself again, with any of her betraying sex! Henceforth, my dearest father," cried he, with a feverish smile, "I will have no mistress but glory! Why, why, did I ever withdraw my eyes from her divine face?"

“ She always suffers, when woman disputes her rights,” returned the Duke.

Louis kissed his father's hand, and retired to his own apartments. His spirit felt beaten and bruised. It cowered under a sense of self-degradation; and throwing himself on his bed, he passed a night of painful retrospection, on all that he had seen and heard of her, who was so lately the object of his untameable wishes.

“ Cold, calculating, and unprincipled !” cried he, “ and to such a woman, did I give the first flames of my heart ! Did I light up the sacred altar to a fiend, in the form of the Queen of Heaven ! — Wretch that I am, to have so debased what was most noble within me ! To sigh for a piece of painted clay ; to adore — and, even now, to weep over a creature, whose soul, if I could behold it divested of its beautiful garments, would disgust me by its sordid, earthward vissage !”

The morning found his agitated spirits subsided to a calm. The intemperance of passion was extinguished in his breast, and as he relinquished the desire of possessing her, who had now lost every grace in his eyes, he strengthened in the hope, that the killing words he had last pronounced to her, were final to her views on him.

Noon brought several animated visitors, to interrupt the studies which were his usual morning occupation, and generally, unfailing tranquillizers. These young Austrians came to invite him to share in various sorts of diversions for the day and the evening; and an hour passed gaily on, in the vivid conversations of versatile youth. A few of the Spaniards made their entrance, and disappeared again. De Patinos was not among them; he had reproached those who had shewn a wish to cultivate the kindness of Louis, with a mean submission to the minion of temporary fortune; they, therefore,

merely made their bow, and without joining in the discourse, soon took their leave.

Louis found an amusing diversity of character in the Austrian group. Most of them held commissions in the Imperial service, and were full of the campaign against Turkey, which the valour of Prince Eugene had just brought to a close. Others, were merely jocund spirits, "hot with the fires of youth, and high in blood." And a few, had a philosophic turn; some in the strait, but most in the crooked path: and these latter, were the least agreeable of the set; as they united an ostentatious assumption of purity of intellect, with a systematic corruption of morals. Louis soon comprehended them, and treated them with marked avoidance. The military young men were decidedly his favourites, their profession was that of his own secret preference, and their manners were most congenial to his taste.

There was a brave ardour in their deportment, and a careless enunciation of their sentiments, which, whether wrong or right, had no aim but the utterance of the moment; and, commonly, could as easily be turned from the wrong to the right, as from the right to wrong. The faction was in their blood, not in their understanding; and when the one was cooled, the other might soon be recalled to order.

While Louis was attending to Count Koninseg's account of the tremendous battle of Belgrade, a messenger arrived from the Duke de Ripperda. He brought a letter for the Marquis de Montemar. With a blanched cheek, he broke the seal; but the contents were a reprieve. The Duke told him, he had not yet seen the Empress. She was gone to the Baths at Baden, with Maria Theresa, who had sustained a relapse; and Countess Alheim was their companion. The Emperor, had retired with

his Council, for a few days to the Luxemburg, to avoid the persecution of the foreign ministers; and thither, by his command, Ripperda had accompanied him.

Louis closed the letter with a renovated countenance. He was left to do the honours of the Ambassador's table, not only to its usual guests, but to a party of noble Austrians, whom Ripperda had invited. The Duke being absent, the Spaniards were haughty and reserved at dinner, as they affected to be, when they encountered Louis apart; and, as soon as the desert was placed, de Patinos, and another of the name of Orendayn, rose from their seats; and, with cold bows to the young secretary of legation and his guests, quitted the room, to join societies more agreeable to their humour.

Till the opera hour, the time passed merrily with the Austrian group; and forgetful of his bosom's care, by their

animated host. The ring-leader of the Spaniards' discontent being gone, in the person of de Patinos, the rest of the young grandes fell in with the cheerfulness of the company. Subjects of taste, war, and beauty, ruled the glowing hours; but on the latter subject, Louis discoursed uneasily, and he was glad to see Koninseg look at his watch, and point to it as a signal for adjourning to the theatre.

“ My aunt, will be impatient,” cried he, “ she is determined, that he who danced with Amelia at her first ball, shall conduct her to her first opera.”

It was also the first opera to Louis. He had never seen any in England; and until now, he had no opportunity of visiting that at Vienna. The *Palais de Espagne* soon poured forth its gay inmates; and Louis and Count Koninseg turned towards the mansion of the Princess de Waradin. It was lit up in the fullest splendor, although no other

visitors were expected but de Montemar, and her nephew. The artless Amelia smiled and blushed, and smiled again, when her mother, putting her arm into Koninseg's, requested Louis to take charge of her daughter. He politely obeyed, and led her to the carriage, while she prattled all the way with the volubility of a giddy child, delighted at being treated like a woman.

The opera-house presented but a gloomy appearance, from the extreme scarcity of light, till the curtain drew up, and discovered a brilliant chandelier, which hung directly over the actors. The illumination of the stage cast the audience into deeper obscurity; therefore, of the company in the boxes Louis had very little cognizance, while the dresses and decorations of the opera, and the exquisite singing, might have filled him with admiration, had not the style of the music, reminded him of the first time he had heard the like, when the fair

Italian sung in his uncle's castle. He recollected his consequent feelings that night; and humiliated in the remembrance, compared those hours of infatuation, with his admiration of Otteline, and exclaimed to himself—“What a slave have I been, to my eye and ear! Music, I shall never like again; and beauty I shall abhor!”

As there was little of the latter, excepting youth and a blooming complexion, in the smiling Amelia, to warn him of his abjuration; her incessant questions and remarks on what was going forward on the stage, amused him; and his attention to what she said, gratified the views of her mother.

Apostola Zero, the father of the regular Italian Opera, had been invited to Vienna by the Emperor; and to reward his acquiescence, Charles invested him with two dissimilar, but productive employments—Imperial historiographer, and poet of the court opera. ‘The grate-

ful Italian dedicated his comprehensive genius solely to his munificent patron ; and the present performance was the first night of a new composition he had formed on the story of Proserpine. The last act was a representation of the infernal kingdom ; laying bare the foundations of *Ætna*, and exhibiting all the terrors of the subterranean world. The curtain had hardly dropped, which it did in some confusion, when an extraordinary bustle was heard behind the scenes. Soon after, the theatre filled with smoke, and cries of fire were distinctly heard from behind. Persons from the boxes jumped on the stage, while the curtain was rent down by those before and behind it ; and the scene of horror that was discovered to those, who were not so entirely absorbed in their fears but they could look around them, is not to be described. The fire was seen bursting in several directions ; men were mounted aloft on the burning rafters, breaking down with their hatchets

the combustible apparatus in the way. Water was dashing and streaming everywhere. The terrible light which filled the stage, too well portrayed the inside of a raging volcano ; sheets of flame, like forked tongues, threw themselves forward from a thousand gaping mouths, licking the ceiling, and entering the boxes. Shrieks, and groans, and dismal cries, mingled with the iron clang of hammers, the fall of timber, and the rush of fire and of people, assailed the ear in one horrid moment of time.

At the first alarm, the ladies in the box with Louis, had been hurried out by him, and some other gentlemen who had joined them in the course of the evening. The poor little Amelia, true to nature, no sooner thought herself in danger, than breaking from the protecting arms of Louis, (who had caught her in them to hurry her through the pressing crowd), she threw herself upon the bosom of her mother, and fainted away. The Princess had

more fortitude; and, assisted by her nephew, bore out the insensible girl, while Louis and the other gentleman made a passage for them to the great door.

In passing the entrance of an obscure gallery, that led to an upper range of boxes, he distinguished, in the midst of the uproar, shrieks of peculiar distress. It was the very cry of agony and despair. Looking round for a moment, he saw that his present charges were well enough protected, and that he might safely leave them, to see and to succour this terrific appeal. But even in the instant he was turning to obey the impulse, he heard a fearful crash behind him; and a rush of people followed, who bore him and his party, like a flood, into the square before the theatre. All, then, was secure with them. But for the poor suppliant, whose cries had pierced his heart, she was either lost, or abandoned to the flames! At least, he would attempt to hear if her voice yet sounded.

Struggling his way back through the last crowds who were making their escape, some, who felt him push by them in so destructive a direction, cried aloud, — “Whoever you seek must have perished. The top of the stage has fallen in, and the theatre is full of fire.”

But Louis, still fancying he heard the voice, pressed more determinately forward, and soon found himself surrounded by smoke alone. No sounds were distinct, but the raging of the flames in the interior of the building, which roared in their work of destruction, like the temple of Eolus, with all its winds. The heat was so intense, that perspiration burst from all his pores; and the air around him was a burning vapour. He hesitated to advance; and while his lungs filled to suffocation, and the black smoke gleamed with horrid light, he was stepping back, when the shriek burst forth again. Louis flew to the sound. He rushed up a few steps into a narrow passage, answering

the cries as he advanced, in a loud voice, promising help. At the extremity of the passage, which was short, he was interrupted by a closed door; on the other side of which was the terrified suppliant, shaking it with frantic violence. "I cannot open it!" cried she, in answer to his demand.

"Stand from it, then," said he.

He was obeyed; and dashing his foot against it, it flew from its hinges, and a lady instantly precipitated herself into his arms. Another started from her knees, and with a hardly articulate cry of joy, threw herself towards him. Louis clasped his almost insensible burthen firmly to his breast, and bade her trembling companion cling closely to him, as they must move swiftly, to have any chance of escape. He turned round, and the lady, winding her arm in his mantle, flew by his side, till they plunged at once into the dreadful smoke, now red with advancing flames. He

dashed impetuously forward; and his almost stifled companion, partaking the desperate exertion, in a moment afterwards they found themselves, with the issuing volumes, on the platform of the portico.

He ran forward into the middle of the square, with his motionless load. Dangers of a different kind, now menaced them. The flying rafters from the consuming building, the pressure of people, with the throng of carriages, and every confusion attendant on so tremendous a scene. In an agitated voice, his companion asked him, whether he had strength to bear his insensible burthen to the opposite side of the quadrangle. Louis replied in the affirmative. She told him to go strait onwards to the convent of Saint Magdalen; and, as he obeyed, she clung closely to his arm.

When they arrived at the back of the convent, she let go her hold, and taking a key from her bosom, opened a little low

door in the building, and whispered Louis to enter. When he was in, she locked the door again, and bid him follow her in silence. She walked hastily along a narrow stone passage, faintly lit by a few glimmering lamps. Opening an iron-grating at the end, she issued into a garden, which she as swiftly crossed; Louis still following, while the lady he carried, appeared to be reviving under the influence of the fresh air. A high dark structure rose on the other side, the top of which was illumined by the reflected flames, which now rose in spires from the burning theatre. In the side of this building was an arched door, surmounted by a cross. The lady opened it, and Louis followed her into a little chapel; thence, through several winding passages; till they brought him to a superb room, where he laid his charge, now warm with returning animation, on a sofa.

His fair guide instantly applied es-

sences to the recovering senses of the lady, and in a few minutes she opened her eyes. He could only see this happy change, by the gleam which fell on them, as the lids slowly raised ; for the apartment was immense, and only one wax-light stood on a distant table. A moment after, she spoke in a low, inarticulate voice ; and looking round on the chamber, and then on Louis, who stood by her, she caught the hand of her anxious companion, and exclaimed with a cry of joy, “ We are saved ! — and, by whom ! ”

Her head dropped on the arm she had seized, and tears followed this burst of feeling. Her friend bent only her head, and whispered something in her ear, which Louis could not hear. The agitated lady replied, “ No, no ; ” then raising herself from her weeping position, and sitting up on the couch, she said to Louis, — “ I have no words in which to thank my preserver, and, I will not seek

any to deceive him. Even by this light, I can see that I owe my life to the intrepid humanity of the Marquis de Montemar."

The other lady obeyed the motion of her friend's hand, and set the solitary candle on a stand near them. In the full light, Louis recognized the face of the Electress of Bavaria, in the person he had carried from the flames. He had no thought in the recognition, but satisfaction at having rescued female helplessness from so direful a death; and his reply was in unison with his feelings. It was not the Princess he saw before him, nor the enemy of himself and his father; but a woman, agitated from past terror, and grateful to him for having averted its horrid consummation.

She explained the dreadful state of despair, in which he had found her. For, hastening with her only attendant, Madame de Altenstein, through the box to the inner passage door, while attempting

to open it, in the confusion of alarm she turned the key wrong, and having strained the lock by the violence of her first application, no effort could move it. She had then no resource, but cries for help, but they passed unnoticed. And when the terrible crash, at the outcry of the fallen roof, assailed her ear, in aimless phrenzy she would have rushed back into the box, and leaped over into the flames, had not her friend prevented her, by clinging to her knees. Again she flew to the door; — again she rent the air with her unavailing shrieks, — “till you came,” continued she, “like a good angel, to my rescue!”

How different did the Electress appear now in the eyes of Louis, from what she had seemed in the two former times of his seeing her. In the boudoir of Countess Alheim, she looked, and expressed herself, with the proud acknowledgement of a superior, to the vassals who had done her service. At the fête in

la Favorita, she gazed around in haughty carelessness, and remarked with contemptuous sarcasm, on every object. But now, she leaned on the sofa, conversing with him, with the frankness of one who felt that danger and obligation had rendered them equal; and her fine black eyes, large and luminous, as those of the wild gazel, shone on him with eloquent gratitude. In all she said, the force of her character appeared, in the strength of her understanding, and the energy of her feelings.

She explained the nature of the whisper which her confidential attendant had made in her ear, while she lay on her arm. It told her the Marquis de Montemar was her preserver; and it asked permission to dismiss him without farther discovery. "But," continued the Electress, "would I not trust with my fortune, he who has preserved my life?"

She then said, that should it be known to her enemies, that she had been at the

Opera, they would blazon it abroad, as a decisive blow to her hold on the affections of the people. The year of mourning for her husband, was not yet expired; and should it be reported that she had been at any public place, before that stated period, the superstitious populace of Vienna, regarding it as a sacrilegious irreverence to the memory of the dead; would consider her, who had committed the act, as deserving excommunication from the Church,—repudiation from the Imperial family; and a declaration from the Empire, that she had forfeited all claims to her birth-right.

“ It is mere prejudice, that is against me;” said she, “ but a prejudice, having nothing to do with reason, is inaccessible to argument; hence, I can only avoid its sentence by concealment.”

In excuse for the rashness of having incurred so great a risk, for so trifling a gratification, she pleaded her attachment

to music, the innocence of the amusement, and the frequency with which she had enjoyed its stolen pleasures without discovery. By the indulgence of the abbess of Saint Magdalen, who was the aunt of Madame de Altenstein, she passed through the convent garden, which joined the Bavarian palace; and thence, gliding along by remote passages in the sacred dwelling, always reached the Opera-house in security. No other person than Madame de Altenstein was ever her companion; and therefore, when danger came, as no one knew she was there, she had none to watch her safety, or to seek her preservation.

Louis listened to her animated discourse with admiration; but at times, saw a *fierté* in her manner, that recalled to his recollection her who had sanctioned the several attempts on his father's life and his own.

She rose from the sofa, with a countenance full of noble sensibility; "come

with me," said she, "and I will shew you the heir of my gratitude."

He obeyed the motion of her hand, as she passed before him with a light step into an adjoining room. It was a bed-chamber, and in the bed lay a boy in profound sleep. She approached him, and drew Louis to her side. She turned her eyes, brimming in radiant tears, from the child, to her preserver; and putting the hand of the little sleeper, into that of Louis, she gently pressed them together.

"This is my son," said she, in a suppressed voice, "and thus I commit him to the honour of a generous enemy."

Louis bent his lip to the cherubic hand that lay in his; and without a word, glided back with the Electress into the apartment they had left.

She then told him, that as the fortunes of herself and her son, depended on maintaining the affections of the major part of the citizens of Vienna; her fate was now

in the power of his lips. In such a crisis, what was she to expect from his honour to her, or his devotedness to the Empress?

“ My silence, on what has passed,” replied Louis.

“ Then I am your friend for ever!” cried the Electress, her eyes flashing a triumphant fire, and her lips parting with the smile of conscious power; “ you, and you alone, shall share my confidence, with a man worthy to have been the adviser of Augustus. Come to me to-morrow night at this hour, and I will bind you, heart to heart, with the glory of manhood, undaunted Wharton!”

Louis started back. — She laid her hand on his arm.

“ I know your bonds to the Empress, my ambitious, and unjust rival! Your father’s views, and her glozing tongue, have fastened you there, beyond recall. It is not, then, your services as a partizan that I invoke; but to give your society

to my private circle. You are my preserver! I repay you with my friendship; and that sentiment alone, I require in return."

She now held his hand. He felt there was no deception in this demand; no covert device; and the noble frankness of the speaker, so reminded him of the beloved friend whose heart she had offered him, that with irrepressible emotion he sunk upon his knee, and clasping the gracious hand he held, earnestly yet respectfully between his, he replied.

"My veneration, illustrious Princess, must ever be yours. But I am born to withstand my heart! — and while, in reverence to you, I keep an eternal silence on what has happened; in fidelity to myself, I must never venture again into this gracious presence!"

The Electress was not aware that the agitation which rendered his voice and his looks so touching, as he remained at her feet, was excited by tender remem-

branches of the friend he again abjured, in rejecting her society. She was pleased with what she regarded as proofs of sensibility to herself and her cause; and urged him, that if he feared to make his visits openly, they might be paid in secret. With brevity, and ingenuous freedom, he showed how impossible it was for the son of Ripperda, in his present notorious situation, (as the great promoter of all that concerned the pragmatic sanction;) to visit the adversary of such a decree, either openly or in secret. If openly, he must assign a reason for such apparent contradiction in conduct; and the only adequate reason, could not be given without injury to the Electress. Secret visits could not be made without a chance of detection; and that incurred, the ruin of his own honour must be the consequence.

“ I see the cogency of your arguments,” returned she, “ but I grieve to allow them unanswerable. Fortune may

yet favour us. You have twice assisted me in distress. If it happens a third time," added she, smiling impressively, "take care of your destiny! — At present I grant your release. — Silence must be our mutual bond, till we can meet in open day!"

"Silence, inviolable silence!" returned Louis, as he put her hand to his lips, and rose to withdraw.

"Altenstein," cried she, "give me that casket."

The lady obeyed; and the Electress, pressing a spring, opened it. She took out a small miniature of herself, set in plain gold.

"I intended this for the bosom of my best counsellor;" said she, "but he will not object the transfer to him who has preserved my life. Take it de Montemar. It will not, by word or action, betray your esteem for Maria of Bavaria."

"I need not the picture, since the

image is stamped on my heart!" said Louis, pressing it to his breast, and then laying it back into the open casket; "I must not be the possessor of so dangerous a treasure."

A vivid colour kindled on the cheek of the Electress; and with a little elevation of her head, she closed the lid of the box upon the portrait, and said, "For a brave man, Marquis, you are a very coward! — But it shall be as you say. — Farewell, till more propitious hours."

Louis bowed.

"Altenstein," continued she, "shall conduct you out by a private door; and then — Farewell!"

She stretched her hand to him. He again put it to his lips; and as she instantly withdrew, he mechanically obeyed the summons of Madame, to follow her.

As the faithful *Lady of the Key*, (who certainly did not appear to have her name for nothing,) dismissed Louis from a little

obscure door, into a back street, he observed three men approaching; at sight of him, they evidently drew back into the shadow; and as he passed them, the gleam of the lamps attached to this part of the Bavarian residence, fell on his face. Of this he was unconscious, and thinking no more of the eve's-droppers, (on whom his absorbed attention had not cast a second look,) he walked swiftly along.

The observers were no other than Duke Wharton, and the two Spaniards, de Patinos and Orendayn. As soon as he had passed, de Patinos exclaimed; "surely, that is de Montemar!"

"And from the Bavarian palace by stealth!" remarked Orendayn, "what can it mean?"

Wharton was not less surprised than his companions, at a rencontre with Louis at so incredible a place; and the more so, to see him issue from a portal, which, to this instant, was sacred to his own regress at hours of untimely

counsel. But surprise did not appear in him, by look, start, or exclamation.

“No;” replied he, with perfect indifference, “it is one Phaffenberg, who, I believe, has been thought like the Spanish secretary.”

“By heaven,” said the Count, “I never was so deceived in my life! The air of his figure, and the turn of his profile, I could have sworn to; but I now recollect, de Montemar went out a gay coxcomb, in embroidery and plumage, and this person is rather in dingy apparel.”

“A poor scrivener!” replied Wharton, “so I know not how he could be otherwise.”

With this observation they proceeded down the street, towards the consuming theatre. De Patinos believed he had been mistaken, and dismissed the subject of the hated de Montemar. But Orendayn, not less vindictive than his countryman, was more crafty; and sus-

pecting the manner of Wharton, (his eyesight not being sufficiently clear to give him conviction,) walked on in silence, ruminating on future observation. For the Duke himself, though he discoursed on a thousand subjects, he thought of none but Louis, till he could hear his appearance at that door accounted for by the Electress herself.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.













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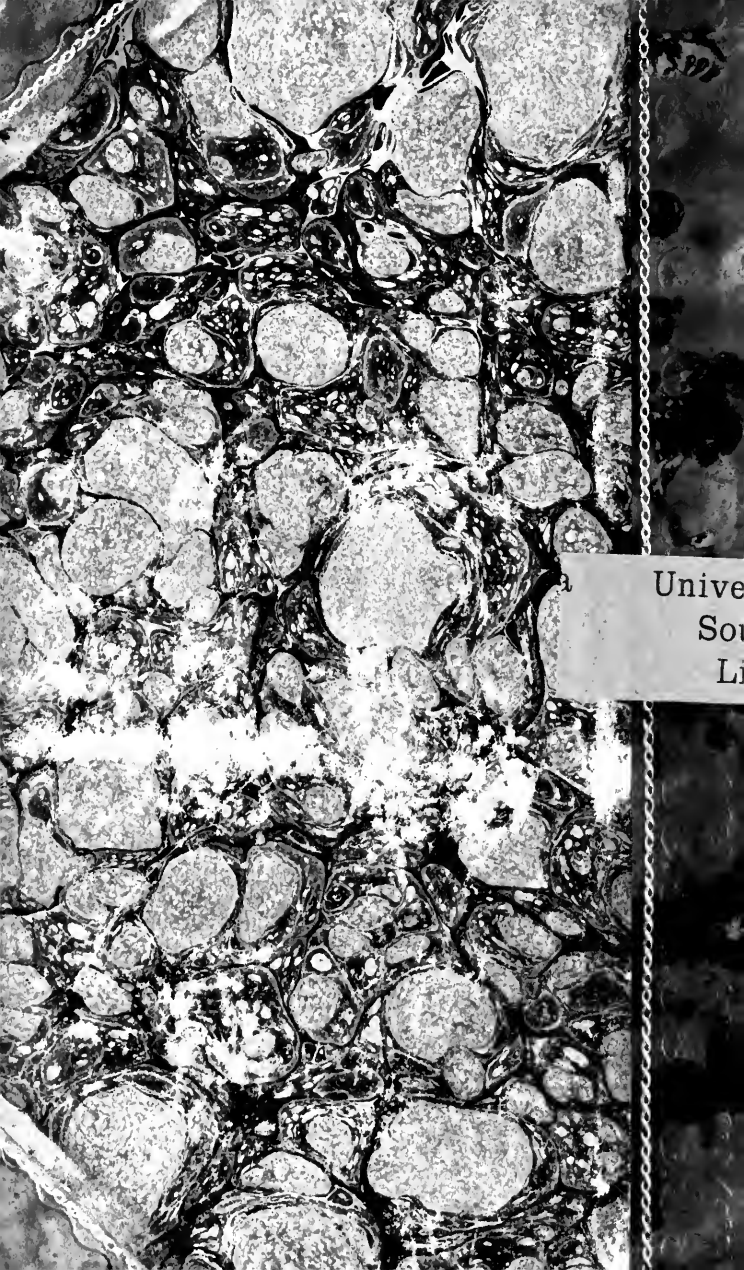
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